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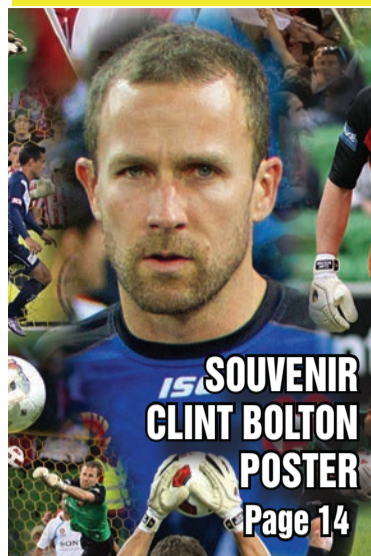
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W e e k l y



A-League Round 15 Friday 13th Jan - Sunday 15th Jan 2012

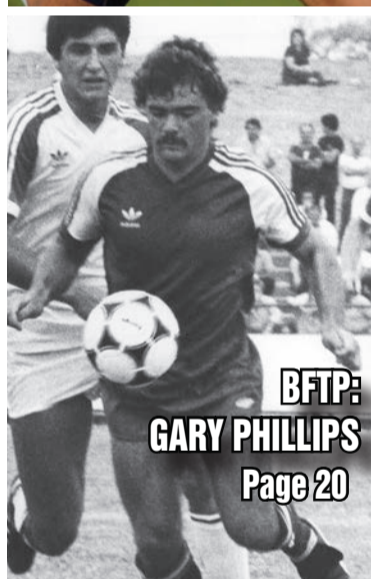
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PHOTO: ANITA MILAS



VICTORY HERALDS NEW COACH
JIM'LL FIX IT!

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The Passing of a Sydney Legend



Not all legends make their names on the pitch.

Last week, the Sydney FC community was rocked to learn that one of their own had passed on after a long battle with cancer. William "Doggadog" Duran was an original member of the Cove and was famous for many things – not least his battle cry to any less than whole-hearted potential Cove members: "Sing or f*ck off!"

Every club has among its harder core members someone like Dogga – the bloke who always shows up at the tifo days. Is always a centre of attention in the pubs heading towards the ground – home or away. Dogga was larger than life and one of Sydney FC's most beloved. The Cove will find it hard to recover from his loss.

So deep was his impact on the club, that the entire apparatus of modern C21 professional football was obliged to pause

for a minute before the game against F3 rivals, Central Coast, to remember Dogga on the big screen, in tifos and on the pitch. Both sets of players saluted and his all-time favourite, Alex Brosque, stood in his place for the game.

It's moments like this that remind us that, while we may hate each other figuratively for 90 minutes every week, the football tribes are all part of a greater community. We all feel the Cove's loss and we know that with Dogga's depar-

ture, the game is definitely the poorer.

To Dogga's family, the Sydney club, the Cove and all the Sydney fans – congratulations on a profoundly moving tribute to a fantastic bloke.

There may have been 60 seconds of silence, but I could have sworn I heard someone shouting: "Sing or f*ck off!"

AD

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Magilton appointed as new Victory coach

Melbourne Victory is pleased to announce that former Ipswich Town and Queens Park Rangers Coach, Jim Magilton, has been appointed as the clubs Head Coach for the remainder of the Hyundai A-League 2011/12 season.

Chairman, Anthony Di Pietro, made the following statement at Saturday's press conference;

"On behalf of the Melbourne Victory Board of Directors, it gives me great pleasure to announce that the club has appointed former Northern Ireland international, Jim Magilton, as its Head Coach until the end of the 2011/12 Hyundai A-League season."

"Jim was not only an outstanding footballer, but he also possesses considerable managerial experience, having coached at Ipswich Town in the English Championship for 3 seasons, before moving on to current English Premier League outfit, Queens Park Rangers."

"Jim started his career as a youth player at Liverpool, before building a successful senior career at clubs such as Southampton, Sheffield Wednesday and finally, Ipswich Town, where he hung up his boots and moved straight

into the role as the clubs Head Coach in 2006."

"In his 700-game playing career, including 52 international caps, Jim served as captain of every club he played for, not to mention his country, Northern Ireland."

"Most importantly though, Jim is an ambitious manager, who is well credentialed, holding a UEFA pro-license and we're very excited to welcome him to Melbourne Victory."

After impressing in the clubs original search for a coach last year, Magilton was understandably delighted to receive a call early on Thursday morning. "I'm thrilled to have been given this opportunity until the end of the season," the 42 year-old said.

"The facilities here are amazing and some of the best I've seen, but all of that means nothing if you don't put the results on the board and win games of football."

"I know Melbourne Victory is a big club and they've had great success in the past, so I'm really keen to try and help them turn around their campaign over the next 4 months," he added.



Meet the Press: Jim Magilton and Melbourne Victory chairman Anthony Di Pietro at last Saturday's press conference. Photo: ANITA MILAS

Olyroos selections limited to 3 players per club

Football Federation Australia (FFA) has announced that the Qantas Olyroos squad selection for next month's AFC Asian Qualifiers for the 2012 London Olympic Games will be limited to three players per club.

The voluntary limit has been put in place by FFA following extensive consultations with Hyundai A-League clubs affected by player call ups for the Qantas Olyroos.

The Qantas Olyroos play Uzbekistan in Tashkent on Sunday 5 February and the United Arab Emirates in Al Ain on Wednesday 22 February.

"The impact on the A-League clubs is something we always take into consideration when developing the under-age national teams program," said FFA National Technical Director, Han Berger.

"In this case, Aurelio Vidmar is confident he can select a very strong squad within the limits of using no more than three players per club.

"As a result, the A-League clubs can plan with some certainty for the period when the players will be away for these very important Olympic qualification matches."

In addition, the travel plans for the Qantas Olyroos have been adjusted in the interests of player welfare. This will enable A-League players selected for the February matches to play for their club in Week 17 matches (26 January – 29 January) before departing for Tashkent.

The provisional plan was for two separate trips away for the February matches, with the players returning to

their A-League clubs in between.

"Having considered all the options, we believe the long-haul flights should be minimised by having one trip away to take in the two matches," said Berger.

"This is in the best interests of the players' health and well-being, as well as the best interests of the clubs. The players will now be available for Week 17 matches due to the slightly later departure for Tashkent and will return to their clubs in better condition because of the reduced travel.

"The new travel plans don't extend the time the players are away from their clubs, it just makes the trip in one block of days rather than two separate blocks.

"I would like to thank all the A-League coaches and football directors involved in this planning. The logistics are never easy in these circumstances, but I believe we now have the best outcome possible for the players, the Olympic campaign and the A-League clubs."

Aurelio Vidmar is expected to name his 18-player squad on 16 January. FFA continues to talk with European and Asian clubs about the release of eligible Australian players. The AFC Asian qualifiers for the 2012 London Olympic Games are not scheduled on FIFA dates reserved for international fixtures, meaning overseas clubs are under no formal obligation to release players.

'Spiderman' Macallister closing in on recall

By Neil Favager

BIG Dylan Macallister is in line for a recall to the Gold Coast United squad to face one of his former clubs this Sunday after recovering well from the hamstring strain that has sidelined him since the Boxing Day clash against Brisbane Roar.

The United striker, who earlier in the season was bitten by a red back spider, has missed the last three outings but trained fully today and looks to be well on the way to full fitness in time for the visit of Wellington Phoenix.

His availability is a welcome boost to Miron Bleiberg's attacking stocks, but at the same time will present the Gold Coast Head Coach with something of a selection headache after his side fashioned 30 attempts on goal last weekend.

'Spiderman' has fond memories of his time with the Phoenix, but was left frustrated the last time the two teams met in round one of this season's competition when he had two goals disallowed for offside.

One was clear cut, but the other marginal to say the least, and the 29-year-old is more than keen to add to his three-goal tally this weekend if given the chance.

"I think I was a bit unlucky in the first game of the season. Both of my 'goals' were given offside and I think one of them was a bit dubious, but this week it's important for me to get some minutes on the field if I can and if I can get a goal for the team then that would make everything even better," Macallister said.

"I've still got to strengthen it (the hamstring) up a bit and go through a few more tests to make sure I'm



Gold Coast fans will be hoping Dylan Macallister will be back in the frame in time for the weekend. Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE

okay because you don't want to rush a hamstring injury, but so far, so good. "Last time we played them they got a goal quite early and even though we played good football it was a late strike from James Brown that snatched us a point.

"We've been playing well these last few weeks and this is a game we should be winning. We're still well in touch with the top six regardless of our current league position so there's a lot to play for. Two wins on the trot in the Hyundai A-League and you shoot up the ladder.

"Wellington have been doing well and have had a good season so far, but we'll be concentrating on our own game and what we're doing, not worrying about the opposition. We want to come out firing and start taking more of the chances we've been creating. If we can do that then we can shoot up the table.

"A draw on Sunday won't do and we'll be thinking about nothing else but all three points and a good win. Results haven't been what we wanted or expected for most of the season, but football-wise we've been doing

well. There are still very high hopes for this campaign as we're only halfway through and the mood among the players is positive every day."

Apart from long-term victims Glen Moss (groin) and Joel Porter (hamstring), Miron Bleiberg should have the luxury of a full roster to choose from with no suspensions or injuries hampering his team selection. Gold Coast have lost only one of their last six matches, conceding just four goals in the process.

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SCOREBOARD

TABLE	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Central Coast Mariners	15	10	3	2	25	10	15	33
2 Brisbane Roar	16	7	4	5	31	19	12	25
3 Melbourne Heart	15	7	4	4	25	19	6	25
4 Wellington Phoenix	16	6	3	7	22	20	2	21
5 Sydney FC	15	5	4	6	18	23	-5	19
6 Melbourne Victory	15	4	6	5	19	22	-3	18
7 Perth Glory	15	5	3	7	16	22	-6	18
8 Adelaide United	15	4	6	5	16	25	-9	18
9 Newcastle Jets	15	5	2	8	19	27	-8	17
10 Gold Coast United	15	3	5	7	18	22	-4	14

THIS WEEK	Week 15	Fixture	Venue	Local	AEDT
	Fri 13 Jan 2012	Melbourne Victory v Adelaide United	AAMI Park	8:00pm	8:00pm
	Sat 14 Jan 2012	Central Coast Mariners v Newcastle Jets	Bluetongue Stadium	5:30pm	5:30pm
	Sat 14 Jan 2012	Brisbane Roar v Sydney FC	Suncorp Stadium	6:45pm	7:45pm
	Sun 15 Jan 2012	Melbourne Heart v Perth Glory	AAMI Park	4:00pm	4:00pm
	Sun 15 Jan 2012	Gold Coast United v Wellington Phoenix	Skilled Park	5:30pm	6:30pm
NEXT WEEK	Mid-Week	Fixture	Venue	Local	AEDT
	Wed 18 Jan 12	Sydney FC Vs Perth Glory	Campbelltown Stadium	5.30pm	5:30pm
	Wed 18 Jan 12	Melbourne Heart FC Vs Central Coast Mariners	AAMI Park	7.30pm	7:30pm
	Week 16				
	Fri 20 Jan 2012	Newcastle Jets v Wellington Phoenix	Ausgrid Stadium	8:00pm	8:00pm
	Sat 21 Jan 2012	Central Coast Mariners v Adelaide United	Bluetongue Stadium	5:30pm	5:30pm
	Sat 21 Jan 2012	Melbourne Heart v Brisbane Roar	AAMI Park	7:45pm	7:45pm
	Sun 22 Jan 2012	Sydney FC v Gold Coast United	Sydney Football Stadium	5:00pm	5:00pm
	Sun 22 Jan 2012	Perth Glory v Melbourne Victory	nib Stadium	4:30pm	7:30pm

ROUND 14 RESULTS

Adelaide United FC 1
(van Dijk 78' (pen))
Brisbane Roar 1
(Nakajima-Farran 59')

Melbourne Victory 2
(Sung-Hwan Byung own goals 7', 74')
Newcastle Jets 1
(Ryan Griffiths 85')

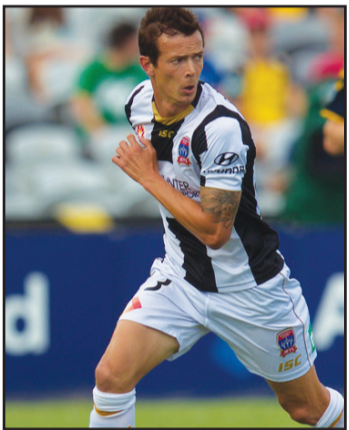
Sydney FC 0
Central Coast Mariners 1
(Oliver Bozanic 9)

Wellington Phoenix 0
Perth Glory 1
(J Mitchell)

GOLD COAST UNITED 1
(Rigters 72')
MELBOURNE HEART 1
(Sarkies 8')

TOP GOAL SCORERS

9 - Besart Berisha (Roar)
7- Matt Simon (Mariners)
6- Ryan Griffiths (Jets),
Carlos Hernandez (Victory),
Archie Thompson (Victory),
Jeremy Brockie (Jets),
Mate Dugandzic (Heart),
Mitch Nichols (Roar)
5 - Shane Smeltz (Glory),
4 - James Brown (GCUFC),
Nick Carle (SFC), Henrique
(Roar), Eli Babalj (Heart)



Newcastle Jets' Ryan Griffiths moves into equal 3rd place after netting a late consolation against Victory.

A-LEAGUE TEAM OF THE WEEK ROUND 14

Compiled by Steven Talevski



GK: Clint Bolton – He may have conceded a goal but the veteran goalkeeper made a series of great saves to help the Heart gain a point away from home.

RB: Ivan Franjic – After an Ange Postecoglou experiment of playing him further up the field, Franjic was sent back to right back where he was able to cause trouble for the Adelaide defence with his counter attacking runs.

CB: Patrick Zwaanswijk – The Dutch defender had another great game in defence which leads him to make his third straight and overall sixth appearance in Goal! Weekly's team of the week.

CB: Josh Mitchell – The 27 year old defender scored his first goal in Australian top flight football and kept a clean sheet in a one nil victory over Wellington.

RB: Adama Traore – The Ivorian left back created numerous of chances for the Gold Coast in his best game of the season.

CDM: Paul Beekmans – Gold Coast's Dutch midfielder had a great game controlling the midfield launching a series of attacks and found himself unlucky not to be on the score sheet when he hit the woodwork twice along with being kept out by

Clint Bolton.

RCM: Oliver Bozanic – The Olyroo captain scored the only goal in the South New South Wales derby and had a great game in the midfield to celebrate his 23rd birthday.

LCM: Liam Miller – The former Manchester United and Celtic midfielder had one of his best performances in the A-League as he guided Perth Glory to an impressive one nil victory over Wellington in wet and windy conditions.

RW: Issey Nakajima-Farran – The Canadian international troubled the Adelaide defence with sharp runs and good passing before he opened the scoring in the 60th minute when he comfortably slotted in a Rocky Visconte cross.

ST: Maceo Rigters – The Gold Coast front man scored the equaliser with a clever back heel as he troubled the Heart defence with his hard work on and off the ball.

LW: Harry Kewell – Melbourne Victory's marquee had a terrific game with a number of sublime passes which caused havoc to the Jets defenders and created the opener at AAMI Park.

Star Man

Liam Miller
Perth Glory



The former Irish international had one of his best games in the A-League as he helped Perth clinch the three points against Wellington in wet and windy conditions that he has become used to over his career in Britain. Miller controlled the midfield with solid passing and was able to turn defence into attack allowing Perth to threaten the Phoenix goal. With Manchester United, Celtic and Sunderland on his impressive resume, Miller continues to settle in with life in the A-League and at Perth Glory as they look to make a finals push in which Miller may play a pivotal role.

Thank God It's GW on a Friday... **Now available at all good newsagents every Friday**
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Adelaide United

1

Brisbane Roar

1

Match Details

Adelaide United FC 1 (van Dijk 78' (pen))

Brisbane Roar 1 (Nakajima-Farran 59')

Referee: Ben Williams

Crowd: 11,274 @ Hindmarsh Stadium

Adelaide United line-up: 1.Eugene Galekovic (gk) (c), 3.Nigel Boogaard, 5.Daniel Mullen, 7.Zenon Caravella (2.Osama Malik 67'), 9.Sergio van Dijk, 10.Dario Vidusic (17.Iain Ramsay 58'), 11.Bruce Djite, 12.Antony Golec, 14.Cameron Watson, 18.Fabian Barbiero (15.Jacob Melling 76'), 21.Francisco Usucar

Substitutes not used: 20.Mark Birighitti (gk)

Yellow Cards: Barbiero 45', van Dijk 54'

Red Cards: Nil

Brisbane Roar line-up: 1.Michael Theoklitos (gk), 2.Matt Smith (c), 3.Shane Stefanutto, 5.Ivan Franjic, 6.Erik Paartalu, 7.Besart Berisha, 8.Massimo Murdocca, 11.Issey Nakajima-Farran (9.Kofi Danning 78'), 14.Rocco Visconte, 16.Mohamed Adnan, 17.Mitch Nichols (18.Luke Brattan 34')

Substitutes not used: 4.Matthew Jurman, 20.Andrew Redmayne (gk)

Yellow Cards: Nakajima-Farran 45', Smith 77'

Reds remain unbeaten under Kosmina

By Nat Adamopoulos

In unseasonal driving rain, Adelaide United's 1 all come-from-behind draw with a dominant Brisbane Roar at Hindmarsh Stadium has kept the Reds unbeaten momentum continuing since returned coach John Kosmina took over the reins from Rini Coolen in Round 12.

The Roar's Issey Nakajima-Farran challenged the Reds for most of the match with his intimidating football style reaping rewards in the 59th minute to give his side the lead, only to be answered by Sergio van Dijk in the 79th minute after converting a controversial late penalty awarded by referee Ben Williams when he was brought down in the box by Roar skipper Matthew Smith. It was an important match for both sides but for different reasons, Roar trying to save face and recover from their recent run of poor performances and the Reds looking to avenge their 7-1 drubbing from when the sides last met continuing their Lazarus rise in the last month.

It took a little while for both sides to settle into the match but it was the Roar that took the bull by the horns by the ten minute mark, responding to coach Ange Postecoglou's spraying from the previous week. With the home-side playing deep, it was midfielder Massimo Murdocca that took the Reds defence by surprise in the 10th minute with a shot from outside the box shooting just wide of the post. As the clocked ticked on The Roar were now working to open up The Reds defence, Shane Stefanutto chipping to Besart Berisha, the mohawked striker almost finding the back of the net denied only by United's excellent keeping skills and reflexes of captain Eugene Galekovic. A call for a penalty by The Roar at the quarter hour mark when Rocky Visconte looked to be tripped just inside the box by Adelaide's Zenon Caravella was turned down, the homeside taking full advantage of the slip in concentration by the visitors as Fabian Barbiero blasted a shot in at the other end for keeper Michael Theoklitos to punch away to safety. With light rain falling Adelaide then looked dangerous again coming down the left flank a ball giving an opportunity for Bruce Djite directly in front but with slippery conditions just failed to get his foot to it as he slid in toward goal.

The heavens soon opened up and the rain came bucketing down sending some of the



Serge van Dijk makes no mistake from the spot to pull the Reds level. Photo: ADAM BUTLER

vocal 11,274 fans scrambling for cover and changing conditions to the extreme for the players. But it didn't dampen the spirits of the visitors, as a hardworking Berisha tested Galekovic again, the keeper maintaining his vidual as he was put to work, moments later parrying away a curling freekick taken by Mohammed Adnan and covering a shot by Ivan Franjic with an outstretched save. In the 42nd minute Barbiero was brought down after being dispossessed by Nakajima-Farran and with the referee waving play on the Japanese-Canadian got a ball in for Barisha to have another shot, his strike being taken with the right glove of the hard to beat Reds keeper. Temperatures rose on the pitch as Nakajima-Farran brought down Barbiero for the second time in quick succession just before the half

time whistle, this time Barbiero retaliating causing a melle that saw Ben Williams himself quickly put a stop to, both players earning themselves a yellow card for their troubles. Although pitch conditions were still slippery for the second half the rain had all but subsided and The Roar quickly came back into the fray with Nakajima Farran causing trouble for the homeside yet again but unable to convert. Kosmina made his first change in the 58th minute as Dario Vidusic was brought off for paceman Iain Ramsay to take to the stage to inject some venom. A minute later Brisbane Roar finally broke through via Visconte, as he fired a ball in for Nakajima-Farran from the base line, the Roar playmaker making no mistake in slotting the ball in. Roar gained momentum as Nakajima-Farran continually

menaced Galekovic, the fans watching on as their side started to slip into old habits taking options to play back with their strikers looking slow and losing the ball too often. A glimmer of hope soon after when what looked like a handball by Brisbane's Berisha from a corner kick had the Reds asking the question, but after referee Williams called for the ball to be played he was soon blowing his whistle for another decision when van Dijk was felled by Matt Smith in the box, this time pointing to the spot for the Reds. The decision was an unfortunate one for Smith as previous contact from Djite made him lose his footing and bring down van Dijk over the top of him, the Dutchman making no mistake in drilling the spot kick past Theoklitos to bring up the equalizer for the upstanding crowd.

A great passage of play just minutes later saw Visconte in the thick of things again, passing the ball to Barisha who threaded it through to substitute Kofi Danning, providing spark for Roar after only being on the pitch for a few minutes. Adelaide not giving up saw Cameron Watson hoping for a winner but his free kick was taken safely by the Roar keeper in the 87th minute. With four minutes extra time played a last ditch effort from a set piece by Roar to snatch the points saw the workhorse Berisha take a glancing header that just went wide of the target leaving both sides to share the spoils.

Post match conferences saw both coaches pleased with their sides performances. "You've got to be (happy with the result)" Kosmina said. "They (Brisbane Roar) are the best side in the country based on their championship last season, their 36 games undefeated, they move the ball around well and they're a difficult side to play against, and our guys pretty much matched them. "We were smart, we showed some ticker when we needed to, we came from behind which was fantastic and we made some terrific opportunities, so it gives us plenty to work with."

The Roar coming off a draw on the Big Wednesday clash against Perth Glory in which Postecoglou branded his players as 'cowardly', had the coach assessing his side differently this time.

"I thought we played well, the whole 90 minutes," Postecoglou said. "I thought we totally controlled the game. We had the ball most of the time, the opposition didn't have too many opportunities and we created quite a few ourselves. We dominated possession and played football mainly in their half. The result sometimes goes your way, sometimes it doesn't. At the end of the day I was pleased with the performance, but disappointed the players didn't get the reward for their efforts."

The next test for Kosmina and his chargers is in the cross border rival match against Melbourne Victory at AAMI Park the third clash between the two sides for this season. Kosmina looks to continue his unbeaten run and not having lost a game in Melbourne for over 400 days, the confidence of his chargers is high and unprecedented as they recover from their terrible slump from just over a month ago. But the Victory with their new incoming coach of Jim Magilton and assistant Kevin Muscat look themselves for a turn around in the side which all adds up to another exciting and fierce encounter on Friday 13 January.

Match Stats

7	Saves	2
3	Attempts on target	8
1	Attempts off target	8
36%	Possession	64%
1	Corners	4
3	Offsides	0
13	Fouls committed	6

Brisbane Roar players celebrate after Issey Nakajima-Farran scores the opener. Photo: ADAM BUTLER



Rocco Visconte and Zenon Caravela vie for dominance whilst Nigel Boogaard prepares to pounce. Photo: ADAM BUTLER

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Melbourne Victory

2

Newcastle Jets

1

Match Details

Melbourne Victory 2 (Sung-Hwan Byung own goals 7', 74')
Newcastle Jets 1 (Ryan Griffiths 85')
Saturday 7 January 2012
Venue: AAMI Park
Referee: Ryan Shephard
Attendance: 14,897

Melbourne Victory 21.Ante Covic, 2.Matthew Foschini, 3.Fabio, 4.Petar Franjic, 6.Leigh Broxham, 8. Grant Brebner, 10. Archie Thompson 12. Rodrigo Vargas, 16.Carlos Hernandez (11.Marco Rojas 76'), 18. Danny Allsopp (19.Isaka Cernak 88'), 22.Harry Kewell (13.Diogo Ferreira 86')
Unused substitutes: 20. Lawrence Thomas.
Yellow cards: Petar Franjic 12', Danny Allsopp 81', Leigh Broxham 90'
Red cards: Nil

Newcastle Jets 1 Ben Kennedy, 2 Taylor Regan, 5 Iago Calvano, 6 Ben Kantarovski, 8 Jeremy Brockie (22 Ali Abbas 77'), 11 Tarek Elrich, 13 Sung-Hwan Byun, 14 Labinot Haliti (Michael Bridges 57'), 18 Marko Jesic (3 Mario Simic 57'), 23 Ryan Griffiths, 25 Jacob Pepper.
Unused substitutes: 19 Matthew Nash.
Yellow cards: Ben Kantarovski 36', Mario Simic 90 + 4'
Red cards: Tarek Elrich 54

Byun own goals gives Victory the points

By Daniel Quinn

A Kevin Muscat led Melbourne Victory and two own goals by Sung-Hwan Byun has defeated Newcastle Jets 2-1 at AAMI Park on Saturday night.

Melbourne Victory announces their new coach as Jim Magilton but Kevin Muscat takes charge of this must win encounter and makes two changes with Danny Allsopp and Fabio coming in for Diogo Ferreira and Isaka Cernak. Newcastle Jets made three changes with Nikola Topor-Stanley, Ruben Zadkovich and Michael Bridges making way for Marko Jesic, Labinot Haliti and Tiago Calvano.

The visitors from Newcastle created the first chance with Labinot Haliti who put in a great low ball for Ryan Griffiths but his effort was poor and straight at Ante Covic.

Five minutes later Victory opened the scoring thanks to an own goal by Sung-Hwan Byun after a great low cross by Harry Kewell. The Korean defender slid into the box with Allsopp before finishing past his own goalie.

Both sides struggled early on after the opener to hold possession but Victory looked dangerous on the counter and pushed forward quickly.

In the space of two minutes Newcastle created two great chances. First with Griffiths whose header was tipped over by Covic before Haliti's brilliant volley was hit straight at the experienced goalie.

Victory's response was to run straight up the other end with Archie Thompson cutting in from the left but he unfortunately hit the post.

Marko Jesic was the next Jet to test Covic in goals with a curling effort from the edge of the box but the Victory custodian saved comfortably.

On 38 minutes Carlos Hernandez saw



Melbourne Victory

Match Stats

Newcastle Jets

4	Saves	5
9	Attempts on target	5
7	Attempts off target	7
50%	Possession	50%
11	Corners	1
5	Offsides	0
11	Fouls committed	9

Archie Thompson and Kevin Muscat share the relief after downing the Jets. Photo: TIM SIZE

Jets' keeper Ben Kennedy off his line and shot from inside of the centre circle but the ball sailed over.

Seconds later Griffiths found some space and shot a powerful drive wide of the net.

Five minutes into the second-half Hernandez was first to try his luck but the Costa Rican's powerful effort was deflected for a corner.

On 51 minutes Leigh Broxham made Kennedy work for his money when the 'keeper saved well from Broxham's

flick off a Hernandez corner.

Two minutes later Tarek Elrich was sent off for denying a goal scoring opportunity when his tackle won the ball after touch Allsopp.

Hernandez continued to cause havoc with his corners when Rodrigo Vargas flicked on another corner before it was deflected for yet another corner.

On 64 minutes Petar Franjic got on the end of Hernandez's great free-kick but his header was directed straight at Kennedy.

Two minutes later and Victory again could have extended their lead as Allsopp's low cross was met by Thompson only for Kennedy to save brilliantly.

On 74 minutes Byun scored another own goal. Hernandez played a brilliant ball to Thompson who ran into the box before passing towards Harry Kewell. But the Korean's interception was put into the net.

Six minutes later Victory continued to look for a third as Allsopp did well to cut

onto his left foot from the right before shooting wide.

On 85 minutes Newcastle scored a late consolidation as Byun tried to make up for his two own goals with a brilliant cross to Griffiths whose first time strike was smashed into the net.

Despite the late efforts of Newcastle Jets Victory held on to win the encounter 2-1. Victory jump up to sixth with three games of the round to be played



Jets' Sung-Hwan Byun can't help but to turn the ball into his own net after pressure from Danny Allsopp. Photo: ANITA MILAS



Danny Allsopp was in the thick of the action all night and this foul by Tarek Elrich lead to a red card for the visitor. Photo: ANITA MILAS

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Sydney FC



0

CC Mariners



1

Match Details

Sydney FC 0
Central Coast Mariners 1 (Oliver Bozanic 9)
Sydney Football Stadium
Crowd: 11,866
Referee: Jarred Gillett

Sydney FC: 1. Liam Reddy, 2. Sebastian Ryall (12. Shannon Cole '60), 4. Pascal Bosschaart, 5. Michael Beauchamp, 7. Brett Emerton, 8. Karol Kisel (11. Dimi Petratos '77), 9. Bruno Cazarine (19. Mark Bridge '46), 10 Nick Carle, 15. Terry McFlynn (c), 17. Terry Antonis, 23. Rhyan Grant.
Sub not used: 20. Ivan Necevski.
Yellow cards: Sebastian Ryall 13, McFlynn 54
Red cards: -

Central Coast: 1. Matthew Ryan, 2. Daniel McBreen (12. Troy Hearfield '60), 3. Josh Rose, 4. Pedj Bojic, 6. Patrick Zwaanswijk, 7. John Hutchinson, 9. Bernie Ibini (23. Adam Kwasnik '77), 11. Oliver Bozanic, 14. Michael McGlinchy, 18. Alex Wilkinson (c), 22. Mustafa Amini (16. Trent Sainsbury '90+3).

Sub not used: 20. Justin Pasfield (gk)
Yellow cards: Bojic 55
Red cards: -

Mariners open up eight point gap

By Mike Salter

Graham Arnold's in-form Central Coast Mariners moved eight points clear at the top of the A-League on Sunday, by defeating Sydney FC in a rather tepid game at the Sydney Football Stadium.

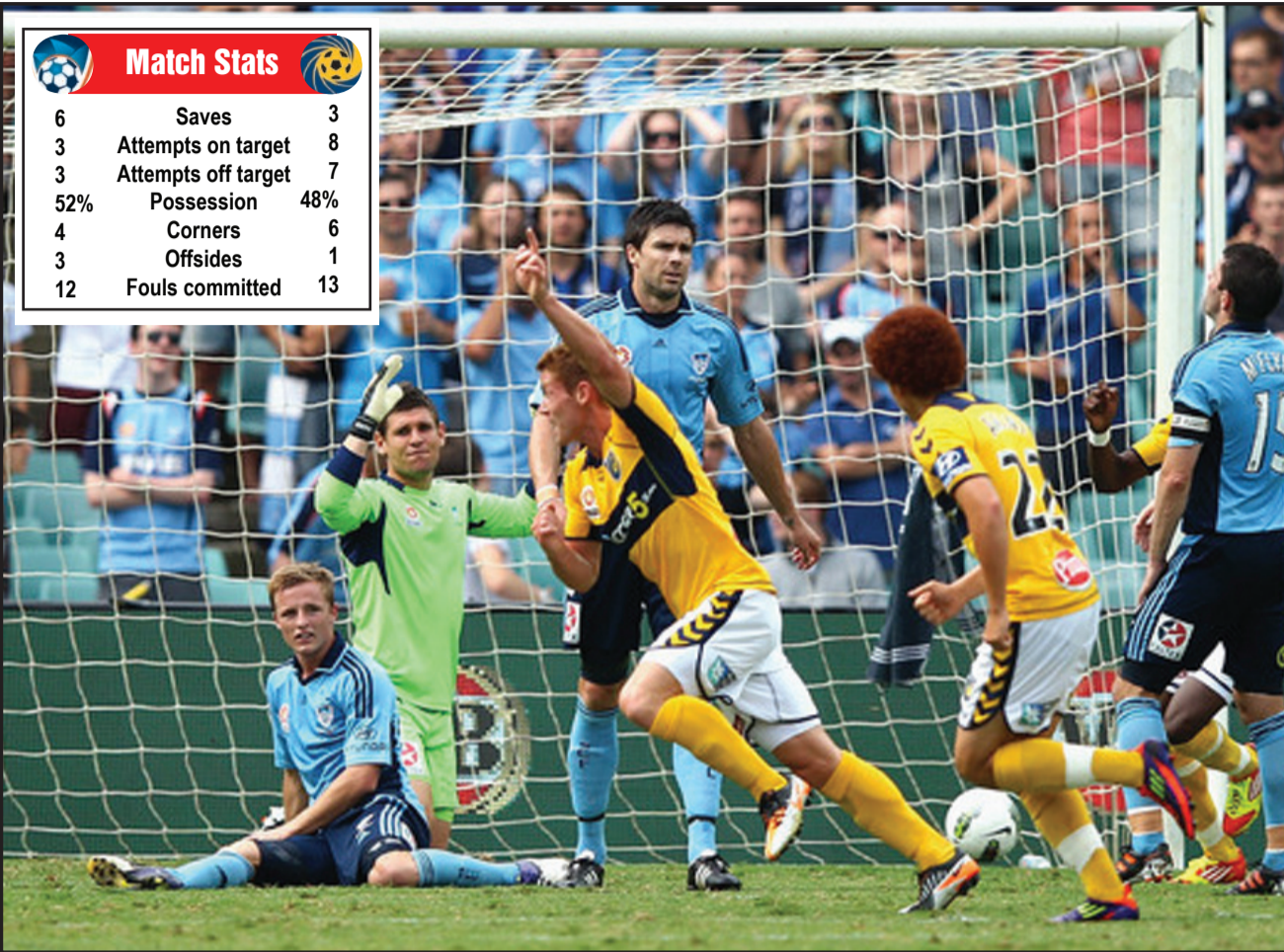
As befitted a side on top of their game, the Mariners moved into the ascendancy from the opening whistle. Achieving plenty of penetration on the wings partly thanks to a questionable defensive reshuffle by Vitezslav Lavicka, the away side duly opened the scoring in the ninth minute. Pedj Bojic found himself on the end of a cutting right-wing move, and his ball inside was shrewdly dummed by Bernie Ibini. It reached Oliver Bozanic, who edged his way into a striking position and fired past Liam Reddy to put the competition leaders ahead.

The Mariners continued to dictate matters, with Ibini's pace proving a handful for Sydney's careworn defence. Sebastian Ryall received a yellow card for a rash foul on the Mariners' No.9 on 14 minutes, and soon afterwards Ibini was left with a clear run on goal after connecting with a straightforward long ball. Hesitating slightly, the young forward allowed Reddy to block the shot.

The visitors had another chance to go further ahead on 22 minutes, when Josh Rose whipped the ball over the bar after a neat lay-off from Ibini. The first effort of note from the hosts arrived two minutes later, when Nick Carle failed to get enough force behind a left-footed shot after Bruno Cazarine had chested the ball down for him.

The rest of the half was barren of chances, with the Mariners always holding the upper hand. In first-half injury time, Patrick Zwaanzwijk, always a threat at set-pieces, had his header from a Michael McGlinchey corner blocked on the Sydney goal-line. Mark Bridge replaced Cazarine at half-time as Lavicka sought to revive Sydney's flagging attack. Although there

Match Stats		
6	Saves	3
3	Attempts on target	8
3	Attempts off target	7
52%	Possession	48%
4	Corners	6
3	Offsides	1
12	Fouls committed	13



Oliver Bozanic nets the winner for the Mariners, much to the exasperation of the SFC defence. Photo: GEOFF JONES

were some positive signs from the home side in the second period, it was to be a frustrating 45 minutes for the Sky Blue faithful.

A fine reverse pass from Terry Antonis to Carle in the 50th minute saw Central Coast custodian Matt Ryan dashing quickly off his line to intercept the subsequent shot. Five minutes later, an otherwise quiet Brett Emerton reached the left-hand by-line and whipped the ball across goal; there was no Sydney

player there to connect.

The Mariners too had their chances in the second period. Shortly before the hour mark, a cross from the influential Bojic was punched out by Reddy at an awkward height for Bozanic, who shot over the bar. Then Michael Beauchamp almost did his old club a favour, heading onto his own post from a long throw; Ibini should perhaps have done better with the rebound.

The game opened up, and the chances began to arrive with more regularity.

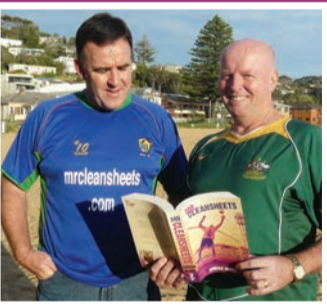
Reddy made a superb save from Ibini after the latter had connected with a cross from Mariners substitute Troy Hearfield. At the other end, a half-chance for Karol Kisel was followed by a better one for Carle, who slammed the ball into Ryan after making his way to the right-hand by-line. Bridge squirted the rebound wide.

Slowly, the Mariners regained control of the game. A stinging shot from Mustafa Amini on 72 minutes, held not without difficulty by Reddy, signalled a change

in the game's momentum, and Sydney threatened only rarely thereafter. Another substitute, Dimitri Petratos, shot wide from a difficult angle with eleven minutes remaining, and Carle failed to make the most of another good chance in injury time. Although they were not at their best, the Mariners were excellent value for the three points, and at the season's halfway point they are sitting very pretty indeed.

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Try as he might but Brett Emerton just can't seem to move Mustafa Amini off the ball. Photo: GEOFF JONES

Wellington Phoenix

0

Perth Glory

1

Match Details

Wellington Phoenix 0
Perth Glory 1 (J Mitchell).
Venue: Wetspac Stadium, Wellington

Phoenix: 20.T.Warner, 2.M.Muscat, 3.T.Lochhead, 6.T.Brown, 7.L.Bertos, 9.C.Greenacre (14.M.Pavloci 61'), 11.D.Cortes (8.P.Ifill 61'), 17.V.Lia (24.A.Smith 71'), 18.B.Sigmund, 21.D.Sanchez, 22.A.Durante.

Yellow cards: Lochhead, Durante.
Red cards: none

Glory: 1.D.Vukovic, 2.J.Mitchell, 5.S.Pantelidis, 7.J.Burns (8.A.Hughes 86'), 9.S.Smeltz (27.Adrezinho 72'), 10.L.Miller, 13.T.Dodd, 14.S.McGarry, 17.T.Howarth, 19.J.Risdon, 21.M.Sterjovski.

Yellow cards: Pantelidis.
Red cards: None

Glory yield maximum points from long haul trip

By Joe Gallagher

Perth Glory picked up their first ever win in Wellington on Sunday afternoon with a dramatic injury time winner to record a 1-0 win against the hosts, Wellington Phoenix.

A forgettable game played in atrocious conditions a city well documented for its poor weather was decided by a 93rd minute header to Josh Mitchell and sees the Phoenix lose touch with the top three and hauls the Glory from second-bottom to a very respectable sixth.

Phoenix boss Ricki Herbert resisted the temptation to rest incumbent goalkeeper Tony Warner and player-coach Chris Greenace and instead opted to play an unchanged eleven from that which delivered a 4-2 defeat over Sydney FC in midweek.

Ian Ferguson on the Glory bench, however, gave a start to Shane Smeltz in place of Billy Mehmet. It was the only change from the 3-3 draw with champions Brisbane on Wednesday. Smeltz, not in his richest vein of form this season, was a fan favourite in his two years in Wellington and his prowess in front of goal has been lacking since the day he left the Phoenix.

The action of the first half was almost as poor as the conditions in the capital – both sides struggled for possession and the best chance fell to Steven McGarry, who saw his shot comfortably saved by Phoenix keeper Warner.

Glory captain Jacob Burns and Travis Dodd also tested Warner from long range, but neither looked like genuinely troubling the Wellington keeper, even in such dire conditions.

The Phoenix's only moment to shout about came when Steve Pantelidis deflected a cross towards goal which was fisted away by Vukovic for a corner. Early into the second half, Phoenix had their only genuine opportunity of the first half. After excellent work from Dani Sanchez and Greenacre, the ball fell to Leo Bertos who delivered a cross that



Leo Bertos receives some close attention from Glory's Josh Mitchell. Photo: DANIEL PANTER

met the Brazilian Daniel ten yards out. His shot – with the help of more than a hint of a fingertip from ex-Wellington stopper Danny Vukovic – cannoned off the crossbar and away to safety for the visitors.

And while one ex-Phoenix player was grateful for the intervention of the woodwork, another was thwarted by it just ten minutes later. Shane Smeltz, who endured a quiet night leading the line for the Glory, saw his shot rattle the frame of the goal and bound away to safety. On this occasion it was Warner – who was left with absolutely no chance – thankful for the striker's misfortune.

But as the game crept into stoppage

time, a restless crowd could not shake the feeling that this was not the Phoenix's day. A draw, to end a run of six home wins in a row, appeared imminent. But Mitchell had other ideas. Tony Lochhead conceded a free kick on the left, and some poor marking at the back post allowed Mitchell to ghost in and nod the ball past a helpless Warner. Though the Phoenix will feel aggrieved, it is a reward for persistence for the Perth side in a game they – very slightly – shaded.

Perth also shade the annual head-to-head between the two sides, two 1-0 wins to the Phoenix's one. Unless the two should meet in a playoff, it will be

the first time that Perth have dominated Wellington over the course of an entire season.

With the all too familiar trend of losing their away games beginning to resurface for the Phoenix, the fact that they have now lost three at home this season has very negative connotations for Herbert's side, and their playoff credentials. And with their next match in Wellington three weeks away, the Phoenix must target results in trips to the Gold Coast and Newcastle in the meantime to maintain touch with the top four.

The calls for the axing of Warner from the starting line-up will continue to grow, and surely now Herbert will be certain to

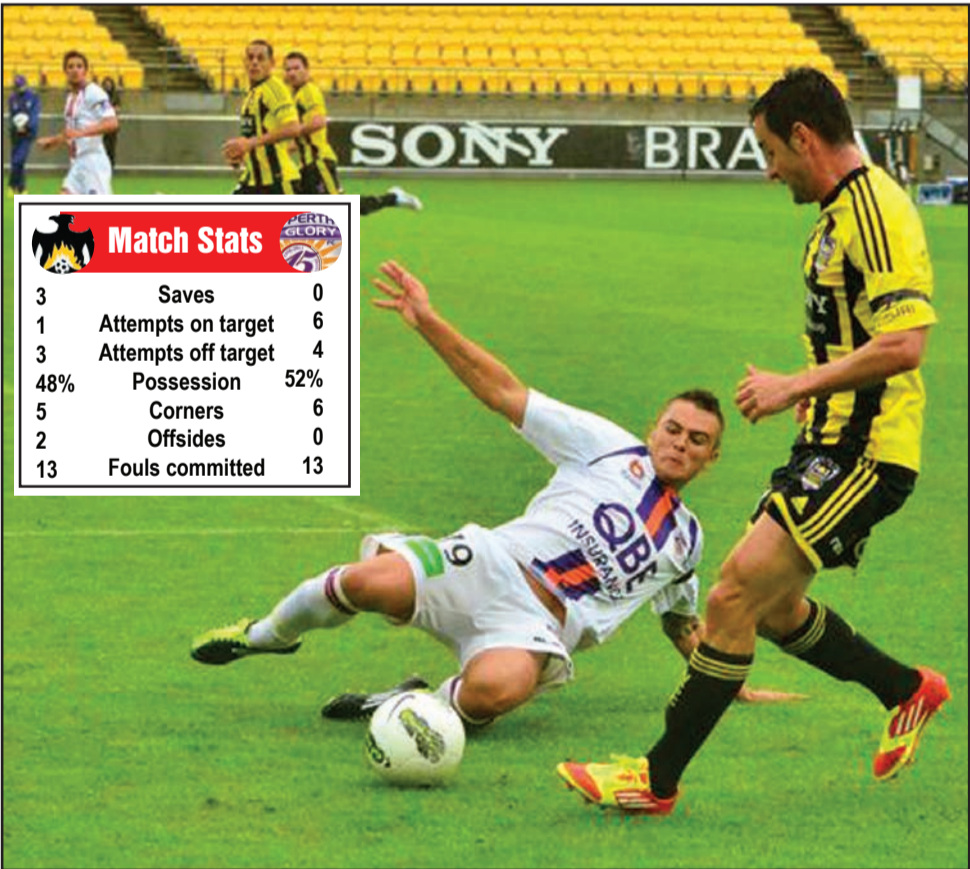
start Ifill on the Gold Coast – the Barbadan appearing one of his most creative outlets after his introduction from the bench.

But this match belongs to the Glory; it was clear from their celebrations after the full time whistle. And they will have some unfamiliar luggage to take with them as they travel the width of Australia tomorrow - three points.

And the Phoenix will have to board a plane and break a duck of their own. The next fortnight will give a very strong indication as to their potential in this year's post-season. The task will be simple. It's time to win across the ditch.



Daniel Sanchez finds himself in the thick of the action as Travis Dod and Liam Miller hunt in pairs. Photo: DANIEL PANTER



Glory's Josh Risdon uses the weather to his advantage with a sliding tackle in the wet. Photo: DANIEL PANTER

	Match Stats	
3	Saves	0
1	Attempts on target	6
3	Attempts off target	4
48%	Possession	52%
5	Corners	6
2	Offsides	0
13	Fouls committed	13

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8

Friday 13th January 2012

Gold Coast United

Melbourne Heart

Match Details

GOLD COAST UNITED 1 (Rigters 72')
MELBOURNE HEART 1 (Sarkies 8')

HT: 0-1

Referee: Matt Gillett
At Skilled Park, Gold Coast

Gold Coast United: 20.Jerrad Tyson [gk], 3.Michael Thwaite (c), 5.Kristian Rees, 6.Paul Beekmans, 12.Dylan Macallister, 13.Ante Rozic, 14.Ben Halloran, 15.Adama Traore, 16.Maceo Rutgers (7.Golgor Mebrahtu 87'), 18.James Brown, 22.Peter Jungschlager, 24.Jonas Salley (17.Chris Harold 65').

Unused subs: 40.Chris O'Connor [gk], 23.Dylan McGowan.

Yellow cards: Jungschlager 43'.
Red cards: None.

Melbourne Heart: 1.Clint Bolton [gk], 2.Michael Marrone, 3.Brendan Hamill, 5.Fred (c) (17.Jason Hoffman 39'), 6.Matt Thompson, 7.Rutger Worm (15.David Williams 62'), 8.Kristian Sarkies, 16.Aziz Behich, 18.Curtis Good, 19.Eli Babalj, 23.Mate Dugandzic (11.Alex Terra 70').

Unused subs: 30.Sebastian Mattei [gk].

Yellow cards: Hamill 19', Fred 25', Bolton 80', Sarkies 90+2'.
Red cards: None.

Close, but no cigar for United

By Neil Favager

DESPITE throwing everything but the kitchen sink at their opponents in the second half, Gold Coast United were held to a 1-1 draw by visitors Melbourne Heart in an entertaining clash at Skilled Park.

After a lacklustre first half performance in which they fell behind to a Kristian Sarkies free-kick after only eight minutes, Gold Coast came out firing after the restart and had Heart camped in their own half.

Only the woodwork and the brilliance of Heart gloveman Clint Bolton prevented United from taking all three points, with Paul Beekmans twice hitting the post in the second period and Kristian Rees once in the first.

Bolton was at his best as Gold Coast forced the issue either side of their equaliser, with Chris Harold, Peter Jungschlager and Adama Traore all watching in frustration as the Heart keeper defied them time after time.

Just as they did the last time the two teams met, Heart took an early lead with the first genuine attempt at goal of the game. Michael Thwaite was penalised for a foul on the edge of the box and when Sarkies drilled the resulting free-kick towards goal, a deflection off James Brown deceived Jerrad Tyson and sent the ball flying into the net.

The visitors lost their captain and talisman Fred just before the break and within minutes Gold Coast almost levelled. Paul Beekmans' cross into a crowded penalty area was met forcefully by Kristian Rees but thumped against the base of the post. When the rebound presented itself the off-balance defender could only apply a swinging leg the ball and Bolton was able to block.

Bolton was called into action again soon afterwards when he palmed away Brown's 20-metre shot, but despite a major improvement towards the end of the half United went in one down at the break.

Match Stats		
2	Saves	7
10	Attempts on target	4
17	Attempts off target	7
45%	Possession	55%
11	Corners	3
2	Offsides	0
9	Fouls committed	10



The Heart celebrate after Kristian Sarkies scores from a long range free-kick. Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE

Adama Traore started the second half brightly after being pushed further forward and his twisting run and cross was almost turned into his own net by Eli Babalj as the big forward attempted to clear.

Gold Coast were piling on the pressure and it seemed only a matter of time before they were rewarded, and so it proved as the equaliser duly arrived on 72 minutes. Traore's cross from the left was side-footed back towards goal by

Rees at the far post and Rigters was on hand to divert the ball into the net with a deft back-heel.

The goal sparked an amazing phase of the game with United creating a host of chances in the minutes that followed. Paul Beekmans thundered a 25-metre volley that beat Bolton but struck the inside of the post before running across the goal-line and agonisingly disappearing to safety.

Then moments later Traore's rasping

drive was well saved by Bolton and the keeper then denied Brown within 60 seconds as Gold Coast went hell for leather for the winner.

Amazingly, Beekmans was again denied by the post in the 79th minute, this time with a header, then Jungschlager gave Bolton more work with a fine drive from the edge of the box.

United Head Coach was left frustrated on two counts, but still found praise for his troops who made a mockery of their

current league position.

"I wasn't happy with us in the first half, but after I told them what I thought at the break and we made a few adjustments we did a lot better," Bleiberg said.

"It would have been tough for anyone to tell who was at the bottom of the ladder and who was at the top in that game. We really went for it in the second half and with a bit of luck it would have gone our way," he added.



Paul Beekmans and Jason Hoffman get in a tangle in the quest to gain the upper hand. Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE



Maceo Rutgers turns up the heat against Michael Marrone. Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE

BE A PART OF MELBOURNE'S HEART



Victory Line Up

- Matthew Foschini
- Fabio
- Petar Franjic
- Leigh Broxham
- Matthew Kemp
- Grant Brebner
- Jean Carlos Solorzano
- Archie Thompson
- Marco Rojas
- Rodrigo Vargas
- Diogo Ferreira
- Carlos Hernandez
- Jimmy Jeggo
- Danny Allsopp
- Isaka Cernak
- Lawrence Thomas (GK)
- Ante Covic (GK)
- Harry Kewell
- Adrian Leijer (c)
- *four to be omitted*

In: . Matthew Kemp, 9. Jean Carlos Solorzano, 17. Jimmy Jeggo (all promoted), 23. Adrian Leijer (returns from injury)
Out: 14. Billy Celeski (groin), 15. Tom Pondeljak (back)
Unavailable: 1.Tando Velaphi (stress fracture), 14. Billy Celeski (groin), 15. Tom Pondeljak (back)

Melbourne Victory v Adelaide United

Fri 13 Jan AAMI Park 8:00pm

By John Clark

A fresh start awaits all members of the Victory squad this weekend, when Jim Magilton takes the reins for the first time. Looking to spoil the welcome party will be a revitalised Adelaide United who are unbeaten since John Kosmina took over from Rini Coolen.

The former Ipswich and QPR manager had his first look at the Victory squad against Newcastle last weekend and would have been suitably impressed. The Victory controlled the tempo of the match throughout and created enough chances to ensure the win. Unusually both of Victory's goals were scored by Newcastle's hapless defender Byun.

The new Melbourne gaffer would have been impressed with the form of marquee man Harry Kewell, as well as the forgotten Danny Allsopp who was given a rare starting birth under interim manager Kevin Muscat. What was disappointing for the Victory was their inability once again to keep a clean sheet. You now have to go back to the 12th of November to find the last time the Victory's defence wasn't breached; meaning solidifying the defensive line should be high on Magilton's list of priorities.

Adelaide continued to show the fighting spirit that has been a hallmark of Coach John Kosmina's brief second stint in charge, coming from a goal down to split the points with Brisbane.

Odds:
Victory 1.94
Draw 3.45
AUFC 3.85

Season anew for Victory

The players certainly look a lot more motivated under Kosmina, and he is in turn playing a system that utilises Adelaide's array of attacking weapons. The return to form of Sergio Van Dijk will put a shiver up the spines of defenders around the league, with the star striker looking far more like the player who found the net 17 times last season.

This is the third and final time that these sides will meet during the regular season and so far it has been the Reds who hold the upper hand. They dominated the Victory in their first meeting with Adrian Leijer being sent to the stands after a couple of un-

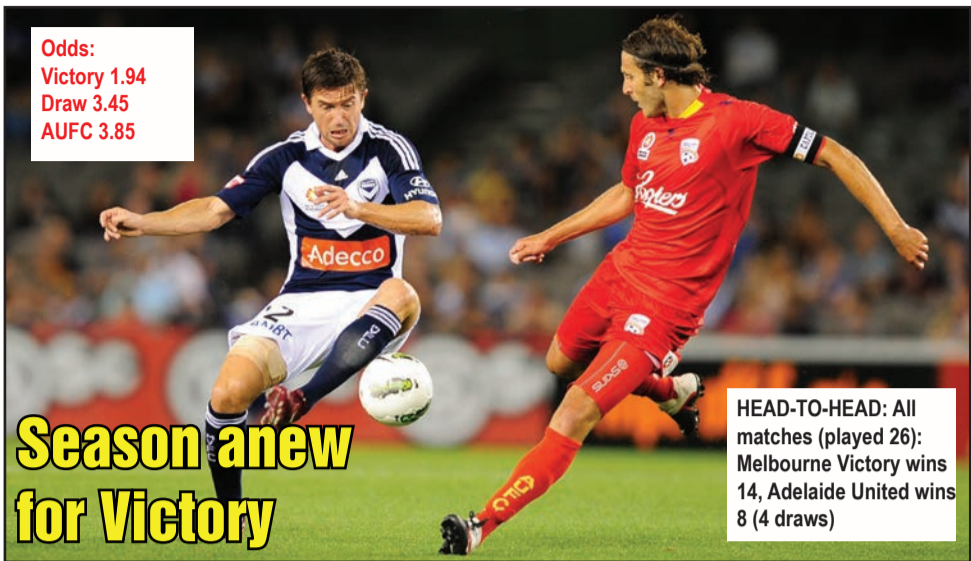
disciplined acts and the second time around at Etihad the Reds were able to snatch a late equaliser after some very loose marking invited Fabien Barbiero to fire home from outside the box. The Victory has always had a fantastic record against Adelaide, but recently the worm has turned slightly with Melbourne unable to defeat the Reds in their last four encounters. Adelaide also seems to have no fear of AAMI Park having won all three of their matches at the venue, including a recent 3-1 triumph of the inform Melbourne Heart.

The Victory will regain Captain Adrian Leijer, however Billy Celeski is unlikely

to be fit. For Adelaide Jon McKain will miss at least six weeks with a knee injury. Jim Magilton has stated that it is a clean slate for all players, so it'll be interesting to see if there are any fresh faces in the squad.

All reports coming out of the Victory this week are particularly positive with the change of manager really galvanising the squad. Whether or not Magilton is the right choice we will have to wait and see, but I think he can be the tonic the Victory need to take the points this weekend.

**Kiss of Death
Victory 2- 1 AUFC**



Adelaide Utd Line Up

- Eugene Galekovic (gk) (c)
- Osama Malik
- Nigel Boogaard
- Daniel Mullen
- Zenon Caravella
- Sergio van Dijk
- Dario Vidosic
- Bruce Djite
- Antony Golec
- Cameron Watson
- Jacob Melling
- Iain Ramsay
- Fabian Barbiero
- Mark Birighitti (gk)
- Francisco Usucar

In: Nil

Out: Nil

Unavailable: Spase Dilevski (groin – 1-2 weeks), Milan Susak (hamstring – 2-3 weeks), Cassio (ankle – 2-3 weeks), Jon McKain (knee – 6 weeks), Evgeniy Levchenko (groin – 5 weeks)



Mariners Line Up

- Mathew Ryan (Gk)
- Daniel McBreen
- Joshua Rose
- Brad Porter
- Patrick Zwaanswijk
- John Hutchinson
- Rostyn Griffiths
- Bernie Ibini
- Adriano Pellegrino
- Oliver Bozanic
- Troy Hearfield
- Stuart Musialik
- Michael McGlinchey
- Brad McDonald
- Trent Sainsbury
- Tomas Rogic
- Alex Wilkinson
- Justin Pasfield (Gk)
- Sam Gallagher
- Mustafa Amini
- Adam Kwasnik
- *six to be omitted*

In: 5. Brad Porter, 10. Adriano Pellegrino, 13. Stuart Musialik, 15. Brad McDonald, 17. Tomas Rogic, 21. Sam Gallagher (All promoted), 8. Rostyn Griffiths (Returns from injury)

Out: Pedj Bojic (Suspended)
Unavailable: Nil

CC Mariners v Newcastle Jets

Sat 14 Jan Bluetongue Stdm 5:30pm

By Adrian Deans

As I've said in the past, there are no more bitter rivalries than Mariners versus Jets.

The F3 derby pits two similar non-metropolitan regions against each other – and the fans, rubbing against each other along the Lake Macquarie southern shore share an enmity far more intense than fans from (say) different states.

The players are aware of their duty – win at all costs.

The first placed Mariners are flying high. In contrast, the Jets are clinging to sixth place on goal difference from resurgent Adelaide United, and dare not slip.

The Mariners beat Sydney FC at home last week – just the one goal in it but they looked comfortable despite shutting up shop in the second half. I had no doubt that if Sydney had scored an undeserved equaliser, the Mariners had several more gears to run through in order to get a decisive second goal.

The Jets also had a win, and led 2 – 0 in the 64th minute. They were dragged back to earth, however, by the last placed Gold Coast and needed an excellent late strike from Labinot Haliti to get them home. It could be said, therefore, that the Jets did lift a gear as needed against a team with whom the Mariners could only draw the week before.

The difference is that the last placed team did not score against the Mariners and that is where I believe this game will be decided – the Mariners' defence.

Rivals clash in F3 Derby

HEAD-TO-HEAD:
All matches (played 25): Central Coast Mariners wins 9, Newcastle Jets wins 8 (8 draws)

Odds:
Mariners 1.50
Draw 4.10
Jets 6.25



Sydney, boasting the likes of Emerton, Carle and co, were made to look very ordinary last week against the Mariners' back five. Wilkinson and Zwaanswijk are like two indomitable towers of defence with Rose and Bojic fast enough to snuff any danger wide, and with attacking instincts to get wide themselves.

Young Mat Ryan goes from strength to strength in the Mariners' goal and has been particularly impressive in recent time coming out for crosses – just about the hardest skill a keeper can learn – especially a keeper on the short side (as keepers go).

Despite some class players in Jeremy Brockie, Ryan Griffiths and Michael Bridges, I don't believe that the Jets have the pace to trouble the best defence in the league.

But will the Mariners be able to score? They didn't miss Matt Simon in the first half against Sydney FC, but perhaps they did in the second. I suspect the Mariners were resting on their laurels in the second half last week and could have gone to a new level if needed, but one suspects that if Matt Simon had been present the scoreline would have been stronger in their favour. Liam Reddy made two point blank saves

from Bernie Ibini but apart from that, there weren't too many more clear cut chances.

I expect the Mariners to win this one on the basis of at least twice the number of chances made by the Jets.

Adrian Deans is the author of Mr Cleansheets – published by Vulgar Press, distributed by Dennis Jones and Associates and available in all good book stores. ebook also available at www.mrcleansheets.com

**Kiss of Death
Mariners 1-0 Jets**



Jets Line Up

- Ben Kennedy (gk)
- Taylor Regan
- Mario Simic
- Nikolai Topor-Stanley
- Tiago Calvano
- Ben Kantarovski
- Jeremy Brockie
- Michael Bridges
- Ruben Zadkovich
- Sung-Hwan Byun
- Labinot Haliti
- James Virgili
- Marco Jescic
- Matthew Nash
- Ali Abbas
- Ryan Griffiths
- Jacob Pepper
- *two to be omitted*

In: 4. Nikolai Topor-Stanley, 17. James Virgili (all promoted), 10. Ruben Zadkovich (returns from suspension)

Out: 11. Tarek Elrich (suspended – 1 match)

Unavailable: Sam Gallaway (knee), 24.Francis Jeffers (ankle), 12. Jobe Wheelhouse (virus)

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1. Michael Theoklitos (GK)
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 5. Ivan Franjic
 6. Erik Paaratlu
 7. Besart Berisha
 8. Massimo Murodocca
 9. Kofi Danning
 10. Henrique
 11. Issey Nakajima-Farran
 14. Rocky Visconte
 16. Mohamed Adnan
 17. Mitch Nichols
 18. Luke Brattan
 19. Jack Hingert
 20. Andrew Redmayne (GK)
 22. Thomas Broich
- *three to be omitted*

In: 10. Henrique (returns from knee injury), 19. Jack Hingert (promoted), 22. Thomas Broich (returns from heel injury)

Out: Nil
Unavailable: Nil

Brisbane Roar v Sydney FC

Sat 14 Jan Suncorp Stadium 7:45pm

By Jarrod Ellis

This Saturday could mark an upturn in Brisbane Roar's season when they host Sydney FC at Suncorp Stadium. According to midweek reports the match is set to mark the return of Thomas Broich and Henrique to the starting eleven.

Brisbane's German playmaker injured his heel playing against Newcastle Jets at Ausgrid Stadium seven weeks ago and while he recovered in time to play the Glory at home the next week, Broich's injury has kept him out of the previous eight Hyundai A-League games.

During his absence Brisbane have fallen from the top of the table to third, struggling to collect points in a run that has included one win in the last eight games.

The last two times these two sides met, Sydney FC ended the Roar's 36 game unbeaten streak with a 2-0 win at WIN Stadium. Brisbane will likely have that in the back of their minds as they now sit 8 points behind Central Coast in the race for the league title.

Most of Brisbane's woes can be put down to a lack of invention and sloppy play in the final third of the pitch, but if Broich and fellow returnee Henrique can quickly find form then the Brisbane of old could be reborn.

That kind of thought is likely not one that will give Sydney fans much joy as

Roar seek record revenge

Odds:
Roar 1.70
Draw 3.60
SFC 4.30

their team's defence has leaked eleven goals in their past four matches.

In response to those results Sydney captain Terry McFlynn came out during the week proclaiming that defence is a team effort and the back four aren't at fault for Sydney's poor goals against record.

"It's not the defence's fault or any one individual," he said.

"It's a collective unit that we've got at this club whether that be attacking or defensive.

"We've been solid defensively for most of the season. We've copped a few goals in recent weeks but all

teams will go through that little spell.

With Melbourne Victory's Mehmet Durakovic having been shown the door in the past week Sydney's own Vitislav Lavicka will no doubt be attempting to ensure that "that little spell" doesn't continue for much longer.

Sydney has the capacity to defend as a unit and can be a highly effective side when doing so. The team wide pressure that they displayed against Brisbane in their encounters earlier this season gave the Roar considerable trouble and if they can rediscover that commitment and desire then

Sydney could have some joy come Saturday night.

Taking that into consideration the likely return of Broich and Henrique should prove a considerable boost to a Brisbane team that has looked short of ideas in recent weeks. Whilst luck hasn't been on their side of late Brisbane aren't likely to need it should Broich and Henrique fire. The Roar has shown flashes of their old selves in their past two matches and this should be the fixture where they rediscover their goal scoring touch.

**Kiss of Death
Roar 3-1 Sydney FC**



Sydney FC Line Up

1. Liam Reddy
 2. Sebastian Ryall
 3. Jamie Coyne
 4. Pascal Bosschaart
 5. Michael Beauchamp
 7. Brett Emerton
 8. Karol Kisel
 9. Bruno Cazarine
 10. Nick Carle
 11. Dimi Petratos
 12. Shannon Cole
 15. Terry McFlynn (c)
 17. Terry Antonis
 18. Juho Makela
 19. Mark Bridge
 20. Ivan Necevski
 21. Scott Jamieson
 23. Rhyan Grant
- *three to be omitted*

In: Scott Jamieson, Jamie Coyne, Juho Makela (all promoted)

Out: Nil
Unavailable: Mitch Mallia (knee – 1 week)

MELBOURNE
HEART



Heart Line Up

1. Clint Bolton (GK)
 2. Michael Marrone
 3. Brendan Hamill
 4. Simon Colosimo
 6. Matt Thompson
 7. Rutger Worm
 8. Kristian Sarkies
 9. Maycon
 10. Wayne Srhoj
 11. Alex Terra
 13. Jonatan Germano
 15. David Williams
 16. Aziz Behich
 17. Jason Hoffman
 18. Curtis Good
 19. Eli Babalj
 23. Mate Dugandzic
 30. Sebastian Mattei (GK)
- *three to be omitted*

In: Maycon (promoted), Simon Colosimo, Jonatan Germano, Wayne Srhoj (all return from injury)

Out: Fred (groin 4-6 weeks)
Unavailable: Nick Kalmar (back – 4 weeks), Kliment Taseski (foot – indefinite)

Melbourne Heart v Perth Glory

Sun 15 Jan AAMI Park 4:00pm

By Jacob Kagi

Melbourne Heart will be trying to bounce back from consecutive disappointing results when they face a suddenly resurgent Perth Glory on Saturday.

After a surprising 3-1 home loss to Adelaide on Big Wednesday, the Heart were held to a 1-1 draw by bottom side Gold Coast United last week and will be desperate to get their top two hopes back on track.

Melbourne sit third - albeit with a game in hand on Brisbane - but with an extremely difficult upcoming schedule which sees them play Central Coast and the Roar in consecutive weeks followed by a trip to Wellington and the derby against the Victory, three points against Perth would be a huge boost.

But their chances of victory suffered a major blow with the news key playmaker Fred faces at least a couple of weeks on the sidelines after injuring his troublesome groin in the Gold Coast match.

Heart coach John van't Schip said his side is still some way off both of last year's Grand Finalists, a gap likely to be made larger during Fred's absence.

"We're not that far yet but we're making steps," he said.

"They (Central Coast and Brisbane) are far more steady teams, and they're clearly playing better than the



Heart aim to get back on track

Odds:
Heart 1.65
Draw 3.60
Glory 4.65

HEAD-TO-HEAD: All matches (played 5): Melbourne Heart wins 1, Perth Glory wins 1 (3 draws)

moment.

"We want to control the game. We want to develop young players but you can't expect them to read a game together and play at the right moments, so that's the next step we have to make."

The loss of Fred will be partially offset by the expected returns of Jonatan Germano and Wayne Srhoj, who will be looking to make his former team suffer.

Even though the Glory's shock win in Wellington last week broke a run where they'd won just one of their previous 11 games, Ian Ferguson's side is outside the top six only on goal differ-

ence and an upset victory of the Heart would have them back on track for a finals spot.

Perth have avoided defeat in their previous three outings, with draws against Newcastle and Brisbane preceding their win in New Zealand.

Much of their improvement has come from a more attacking style which has seen midfielders Mile Sterjovski, Steven McGarry and Travis Dodd provide greater support to the lone striker, an area which was lacking earlier in the season.

Adam Hughes is likely to replace Jacob Burns in midfield if the captain can't recover from the knock he suf-

fered from a heavy challenge against the Phoenix, while central defender Bas van den Brink remains in doubt.

Ferguson said Shane Smeltz should be available for the full 90 minutes after being taken off late in the game against Wellington.

"I wanted to make sure we got the best out of him and got the fitness out of him," he said.

"He has proven that he's fit and that he has come back well. Coming up we've got three games in 10 days or so, so it was wise to bring him off."

**Kiss of Death
Heart 1-1 Glory**



Glory Line Up

1. Danny Vukovic (Gk)
 2. Josh Mitchell
 3. Bas Van Den Brink
 4. Billy Mehmet
 5. Steve Pantelidis
 7. Jacob Burns (C)
 8. Adam Hughes
 9. Shane Smeltz
 10. Liam Miller
 13. Travis Dodd
 14. Steven McGarry
 15. Tommy Amphlett
 16. Evan Berger
 17. Todd Howarth
 18. Jesse Makarounas
 19. Josh Risdon
 21. Mile Sterjovski
 22. Adam Taggart
 27. Andrezinho
 30. Lewis Italiano (Gk)
- ** Five To Be Omitted**

In: 3. Bas Van Den Brink (Returns From Injury), 4. Billy Mehmet (Returns From Injury), 15. Tommy Amphlett (Promoted), 18. Jesse Makarounas (Promoted)

Out: Nil

Unavailable: 6. Chris Coyne (Achilles), 11. Victor Sikora (Hip – Long Term Injury List), 12. Scott Neville (Knee), 20. Neil Young (Abdominal)

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Gold Coast Line Up

20.Jerrad Tyson [gk]
3.Michael Thwaite (c)
5.Kristian Rees
6.Paul Beekmans
7.Golgol Mebrahtu
12.Dylan Macallister
13.Ante Rozic
14.Ben Halloran
15.Adama Traore
16.Maceo Rigters
17.Chris Harold
18.James Brown
21.Daniel Severino
22.Peter Jungschlager
23.Dylan McGowan
24.Jonas Salley
28.Daniel Bowles
29.Mitch Bevan
40.Chris O'Connor [gk]
four to be omitted

In: 12.Dylan Macallister (return from hamstring injury), 21.Daniel Severino, 29.Mitch Bevan, 28.Daniel Bowles (all promoted)

Out: Nil

Unavailable: 1.Glen Moss (groin injury – 7 weeks), 9.Joel Porter (calf – 4 weeks), 19.Chris Broadfoot (ankle injury – indefinite)

Gold Coast United v Wellington Phoenix

By Joe Gallagher

No Wellington Phoenix head slumped more on Sunday than boss Ricki Herbert.

In pouring rain his side had slumped to their third home defeat of the season, but even more disappointing was that the Phoenix's shocking away record will come under immense scrutiny in the coming weeks.

The challenge begins on Sunday with a trip to Queensland to face Miron Bleiberg's Gold Coast United.

Failure to win will see the Wellington-based outfit lose touch with the top three sides of the competition and move closer towards a five team log-jam in the middle of the ladder.

And below that even further there is Gold Coast. Sitting bottom of the ladder, United will be desperate for three points to haul themselves into contention.

To brandish Bleiberg with the wooden spoon does not seem fair – his side have been unlucky with injuries, suspensions, and a horrific run-in with the frame of the goal in last weekend's draw with Melbourne Heart.

This, teamed with Phoenix's disgraceful record across the ditch will suggest that United are more than capable of dragging themselves off the bottom of the ladder on Sunday.

Their opponents have failed to win in Australia this year and have only picked up two points – half of which came in the opening day draw at Skilled Park wherein Gold Coast required a saviour



Acid away test awaits Phoenix

HEAD-TO-HEAD: All matches (played 7): Gold Coast United wins 2, Wellington Phoenix wins 2 (3 draws)

Odds:
GCUFC 1.65
Draw 3.60
Phoenix 4.65

in James Brown to salvage a point. But United's strikeforce will be a far more intimidating prospect this time around. Brown, a high-flying James Halloran and off-season Phoenix tri-allist Maceo Rigters have formed a potent weapon going forward in recent weeks. And that fails to include returning striker Dylan Macallister, who after spending last season under Ricki Herbert in Wellington has labelled this match a 'must win'.

Wellington's most daunting opponent, however, will be themselves and their jitters on the road. With the visit to Gold Coast the first of their two match road

trip, and with seven of their last eleven matches on the road, they could find themselves brilliantly poised to launch an assault at the top four after the coming fortnight.

On the flipside, they could find themselves well out of the running and an outside chance even to finish in the top six should they continue their woe-ful track record across the Tasman. Herbert may not have predicted it pre-season, but one of the sterner tests of his side's mettle will come on the Gold Coast this weekend.

But the Phoenix will be confident with the knowledge that if they were to

break their duck anywhere in Australia, it would be on the Gold Coast. Cellular dwellers, the lowest average attendance in the A-League and desperate for points off the back of the disappointment against Perth, Phoenix will know full well that a win is not out of their grasp.

So desperation will be the order of the day on Sunday. One team will be keen to kickstart their late season surge, and the other eager to shake off an unwanted record.

Kiss of Death
Gold Coast 1-1 Phoenix



Phoenix Line Up

1. Mark Paston (GK)
2. Manny Muscat
3. Tony Lochhead
6. Tim Brown
7. Leo Bertos
8. Paul Ifill
9. Chris Greenacre
11. Daniel
12.Nicky Ward
13. Niko Tsattalios
15.Cameron Lindsay
17. Vince Lia
18. Ben Sigmund
19.Jimmy Downey
20. Tony Warner (GK)
21. Dani Sanchez
22. Andrew Durante (c)
24. Alex Smith
three to be omitted

In: 12.Nicky Ward, 19.Jimmy Downey, 15.Cameron Lindsay (both promoted)

Out: 14. Mirjan Pavlovic (knee – 1-2 weeks)

Unavailable: Lucas Pantelis (knee injury - indefinite)

W-League Preview

Brisbane Roar v Sydney FC
Saturday 14 January
Queensland Sports & Athletics Centre, Brisbane
Local kick-off: 2pm
Live: ABC TV

One of the traditional highlights of the Westfield W-League calendar will provide a fitting and dramatic finale to the league season.

Bragging rights will, as always, be on the line, but so too is second place and an all-important home semi-final. Playing at home Brisbane Roar are in the box seat and need just a draw to hang on to their one-point margin over their rivals.

The last time the pair met was way back in round one when Sydney had the better of a 1-1 draw on home turf. Much has changed since then with both teams boosted by the return of key personnel either from injury or overseas.

Brisbane though should be confident after a potentially season-defining 3-1 win on the road last weekend against Newcastle Jets. Defeat could have meant an unimaginable failure to reach the finals, however victory – such are the fine margins in this season's Westfield W-League – left the Roar holding down second.

The 3-1 win in Newcastle contrasted sharply with Sydney's 2-1 defeat against the same opponent just a week earlier.

Much selection interest will focus on whether super sub Emily Gielnik is in the starting line-up after bagging her seventh goal of the season, six of which have incredibly after coming off the bench.

Despite winning 3-0 in Perth last weekend Sydney were held scoreless in the second half, in stark contrast with their 11-0 defeat of the Glory last month. Coach Alen Stajcic

however fielded a somewhat experimental line-up, perhaps mindful of the suspensions hanging over the head of some important players in the lead up to the finals series.

Brisbane Roar squad: 1. Casey DUMONT (gk), 2. Laura ALLEWAY, 4. Clare POLKINGHORNE (c), 5. Brooke SPENCE, 6. Joanne BURGESS, 7. Kim CARROLL, 9. Catherine CANNULI, 10. Lana HARCH, 11. Alvi LUIK, 13. Tameka BUTT, 14. Vedrana POPOVIC, 15. Sasha MCDONNELL, 16. Michaela HATZIRODOS, 17. Emily GIELNIK, 18. Olga CEBRIAN GARCIA, 19.Ellen BEAUMONT, 20. Hoshimi KISHI (gk), 21. Rebecca PRICE
* three to be omitted
In: None
Out: None
Unavailable: Elise Kellond-Knight (knee – season), Ashley Spina (knee – season)

Sydney FC squad: 1. Allison LIPSHER (gk), 15. Thea SLATYER, 3. Danielle BROGAN, 5. Estelle JOHNSON, 6. Servet UZUNLAR, 4. Renee ROLLASON, 10. Kylie LEDBROOK, 2. Teresa POLIAS, 9. Sarah WALSH, 12. Teigen ALLEN, 8. Caitlin FOORD, 13. Brittany WHITFIELD, 7. Heather GARRIOCK, 19. Leena KHAMIS, 16. Alisha BASS, 14. Rachael SOUTAR, 17. Kyah SIMON, 21. Chloe LOGARZO, 30. Sham KHAMIS (gk)
* four to be omitted
In: None
Out: None
Unavailable: Victoria Balomenos (knee – season), Monique Jackson (knee – season)



The W-league heads into the final round

Perth Glory v Newcastle Jets
Saturday 14 January
6PR Stadium, Perth
Local kick-off: 4pm

This pair met just over three weeks ago with the Jets reasonably comfortable 3-1 victors a few days prior to Christmas.

Both teams enter this contest with differing goals. The home side will need at least a point if they are to avoid the wooden spoon for the first time, while three points are essential if the Jets are to tip Melbourne Victory out of fourth.

The Glory seem to have largely ridden out their mid-season slump which saw them leak goals at an alarming rate. Holding the free-scoring Sydney during the second half last week was a testament to the hunger and determination that evidently still looms large in the playing group.

The Jets will make the arduous journey across the continent playing for their lives, although even a win would still mean they are relying on Melbourne Victory falling to defeat. Even a point for the Victory in Adelaide would see the Victorians advance on goal difference and Jets coach Clayton Zane believes his side's hopes are minimal. Newcastle are set to be without Gemma

Pearce who has shin splints while Gema Simon has recently been struggling with tendonitis.

Perth Glory squad: 1. Mackenzie ARNOLD (gk), 2. Shawn BILLAM, 3. Carys HAWKINS, 5. Shannon MAY, 6. Katarina JUKIC, 7. Sadie LAWRENCE, 8. Tanya OXTOBY (c), 9. Katie HOLTHAM, 11. Ella MASTRANTONIO, 12. Danielle CALAUTTI, 13. Elisa D'OVIDIO, 14. Emily DUNN, 15. Lara FILOCAMO, 17. Marianna TABAIN, 19. Sarah CARROLL, 20. Kristy TESCHINSKY (gk)
* one to be omitted
In: Sadie Lawrence (promoted)
Out: None
Unavailable: Jaymee Gibbons (hip – season), Erika Elze (leg – season)

Newcastle Jets squad: 1. Melissa BARBIERI (gk), 2. Hannah BREWER, 3. Alanna KENNEDY, 4. Gemma PEARCE, 5. Alex HUYNH, 6. Nicola BOLGER, 7. Gema SIMON, 8. Linda O'NEILL, 9. Tara ANDREWS, 10. Emily VAN EGMOND, 11. Lisa DE VANNA, 12. Monnique KOFOED, 13. Stacey DAY, 14. Bronte BATES, 15. Rhali DOBSON, 16. Cassandra KOPPEN, 17. Ariane HINGST (c), 20. Alison LOGUE (gk)

*three to be omitted
In: None
Out: None
Unavailable: None

Adelaide United v Melbourne Victory
Sunday 15 January
Burton Park, Adelaide
Local kick-off: 3pm

Victorian and South Australia rivalry will play out its latest sporting chapter in the Westfield W-League final round. Last match was a resounding 4-0 success for the Victory but, despite the divergent aspirations of the pair heading into the last round, expect this one at Burton Park in Adelaide to be much tighter.

The home side crashed 5-0 last weekend at the hands of a rampant Canberra United though three of those goals were leaked in the final ten minutes. Remarkably Adelaide could have been level at one stage after good chances were denied by the goal-keeper and goalpost respectively.

Adelaide will miss American import Ashleigh Gunning this weekend through suspension, which perhaps will mean even more opportunity for Emma Checker to shine. The rookie teenage defender has been one of the finds of this season's Westfield W-League with some consistent performances.

Coach Dave Edmondson has been pushing his willing players to improve with every match and Adelaide will be hungry to remain clear of bottom-placed Perth Glory and avoid the wooden spoon.

The Victory though have a major goal on which to focus as they eye their second successive fourth-placed finish, following on from their finals debut last season. A point in Adelaide will be enough for Vicki Linton's side to hold off a late challenge from the fast finishing Newcastle.

The team's strength has been an impressive defence, but in attack skipper Jodie Taylor is the league's leading goalscorer with eight strikes, four shy of Canberra ace Michelle Heyman.

Last weekend's bye will see the Victory refreshed for their road trip, ahead of a likely semi-final visit to leaders Canberra the following weekend.

Adelaide United squad: 1. Sian MCLAREN (gk), 2. Ruth WALLACE, 3. Anna GREEN, 4. Daniela DI BARTOLO, 5. Abby ERCEG (c), 6. Ebony PHILCOX, 7. Rachael QUIGLEY, 8. Leanne SLATER, 9. Marijana RAJICIC, 12. Greta FRENCH-KENNEDY, 13. Vanessa REED, 14. Donna COCKAYNE, 15. Emma CHECKER, 16. Grace HENRY 17. Katherine EBBs, 18. Georgia MACRI, 19. Nenita BURGESS, 20. Kristi HARVEY (gk)
* three to be omitted
In: Ebony Philcox, Vanessa Reed, Donna Cockayne (all promoted)
Out: Ashleigh Gunning (suspended – one match)
Unavailable: Angela Fimmano (injured – season)

Melbourne Victory squad: 1.Brianna DAVEY (gk), 2. Rebekah STOTT, 3. Maika RUYTER-HOOLEY, 4. Kendall FLETCHER, 5. Danielle JOHNSON, 6. Rita MANKOWSKA, 7. Stephanie CATLEY, 8. Ashley BROWN, 9. Georgie KOUTROUVELIS, 10. Jodie TAYLOR (c), 11. Caitlin FRIEND, 12. Jackie VOGT, 13. Katrina GORRY, 14. Enza BARILLA, 15. Amy JACKSON, 16. Louisa BISBY, 17. Gulcan KOCA, 18. Stephanie TANTI, 19. Laura SPIRANOVIC, 20. Cassandra DIMOVSKI (gk)
* five to be omitted
In: Katrina Gorry (returns from suspension)
Out: None

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PICS OF THE ROUND 14



FoxSports expert Robbie Slater gets the inside word from Brisbane Roar coach Ange Postecoglou before the 1-1 draw with Adelaide United. Photo: ADAM BUTLER



Victory's caretaker coaching duo of Kevin Muscat and Steve Mautone play the role of 'good cop, bad cop' from the bench. Photo: TIM SIZE

Les Shorrock's Action Packed Picture Page



Harry Kewell attends to his legion of Melbourne Victory fans. Photo: ANITA MILAS



Singing in the rain: An Adelaide United fan embraces the elements along with his team's recent return to form. Photo: ADAM BUTLER



Gold Coast United fans cheer on their team against Melbourne Heart. Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE



Adelaide United fans get the party started at Hindmarsh Stadium in anticipation of the Brisbane Roar. Photo: ADAM BUTLER



Melbourne Victory fans make their feelings heard before match against Newcastle Jets. On this occasion the Victory responded with a 2-1 win, thanks to two own goals by the Jets' Byun. Photo: TIM SIZE

GLINT BOLTON



PHOTOS/GRAPHICS: ANITA MILAS

Victory finally break winless drought



Phil Petreski (Heart) gets in ahead of Caleb Rufer (Sydney) to clear the danger after a corner. Heart players in support are (left to right) Tom Dunn, Kristian Konstantinidis and Jeremy Walker. Photo: JOHN PUNSHON



Kyle Ewart (Jets) hurdles the tackle by James Jeggo (Victory). Photo: JOHN PUNSHON

By Daniel Quinn

Victory register first win
Melbourne Victory and Coach Darren Davies have registered their first win of the season with a 2-0 victory over Newcastle Jets on Sunday at Kingston Heath.

Just after the half hour mark Victory had a host of chances. Firstly with Solorzano who crossed for Rojas but the winger miss-judged the delivery.

Jean-Carlos Solorzano was next, he came close when he cut from the left onto his right but his shot was hit straight at Duncan.

On 37 minutes Victory opened the scoring after Newcastle's defence couldn't clear. Rojas let the ball go before Luke O'Dea finished making it 1-0.

Victory extended their lead thanks to a great through ball from James Riccobene. Solorzano got on the end of the fullback's ball and finished comfortably passed Duncan.

Melbourne Victory coach Darren Davies was delighted to collect his first win of the season. "I am delighted to get the first win of the season but even more so I am happy the way that we

won so I think it's great we won the game playing the style that we want to play."

Sydney too strong for Heart
Brilliant performances from Joel Chianese and Blake Powell has given Sydney FC a 3-1 victory over Melbourne Heart at John Cain Memorial Park on Saturday afternoon.

The visitors took the lead after 56 minutes through Powell. The ball was crossed to the far post but only for Konstantinidis to miss his clearance and for Powell to finish to open the scoring.

But on 67 minutes second-half substitute Phil Petreski slammed the ball into the net from 25 yards to equalise.

Five minutes later Powell poked an effort but only for the post to save Heart's day before Petreski cleared.

On 73 minutes Joel Chianese gave Sydney the lead with a left foot powerful finish at the near post. With the last kick of the ball Powell scored a brilliant finish to finish it off 3-1.

Melbourne Heart coach John Aloisi believes his side's second-half was to blame for the loss. "Sydney are really a good side and I thought we

created a few good chances and we controlled the game quite well and they didn't create much then in the second-half they got on top of us and created a lot of chances. We didn't really get into the second-half and they were better than us and probably deserved to win."

Experience pays off for Central Coast
Goals from Brad McDonald and Adrian Pellegrino have given Central Coast a 2-1 victory over Gold Coast United on Friday night at Pluim Park.

Pellegrino opened the scoring on 4 minutes when the former Perth Glory midfielder finished off a loose ball.

Daniel Bowles had the best chance of the half for Gold Coast but his shot was denied by the Mariners' defence.

On 30 minutes Jake Barker-Daish equalised with a deflected 25-yard free-kick which sent David Bradasevic in goals for Central Coast the wrong way.

On 53 minutes McDonald's and Adam Kwasnik's A-League experience proved to be important when the teamed up before Kwasnik fired over.

The pair swapped six minutes later to take the lead. McDonald easily finished from close range after Kwasnik's great low cross. Despite Gold Coast throwing everything they had at Bradasevic the young 'keeper made some great saved to hold onto the lead to take all three points.

Points shared in 8-goal thriller
The AIS and Perth Glory have shared the three points in a 4-4 draw at AIS Athletics Track on Saturday afternoon.

Yianni Perkatis opened the scoring on just three minutes with a clever back-heel.

Antony Proia then extended that lead on 17 minutes with a great long-range strike to make it 2-0.

But five minutes later Perth grabbed a goal back with Brendan O'Neill scoring with a nice curling effort from outside the box.

Just before the half-hour mark Tommy Amphlett equalised into the top corner which was just after the AIS had a strike ruled out.

Five minutes before half-time Perth took the lead through Ndumba Makeche with a tap-in. But only three minutes into the second-half Ben

Garuccio levelled. On 57 minutes there was another goal thanks to Makeche again who header over Jordan Thurtell in goals. On 65 minutes Proia equalised again with his brace. Thurtell saved the day for AIS with a fantastic save late on to deny Makeche his hat-trick.

Late Alistair Quinn strike denies Adelaide the three points

A stoppage time equaliser from Alistair Quinn has denied Adelaide the three points to draw 1-1 at Burton Park on Sunday.

Teeboy Kamara created the first chance on 5 minutes when he burst into the box but hit his strike right at 'keeper Andrew Redmayne. Kamara then chipped a cross to Evan Kostopoulos who poked past Redmayne to finish on 16 minutes.

On 32 minutes Kostopoulos could have scored his brace but his free-kick was well saved.

The Baby Reds had two great chances on 58 and 70 minutes but both Anthony Trimboli and Kostopoulos were denied.

On 84 minutes George Lambadaridis' free-kick was hit just over before Matt Mundy's header

Results	
CC Mariners 2:1	Gold Coast United
AIS 4:4	Perth Glory
Melbourne Heart FC 0:3	Sydney FC
Melbourne Victory 2:0	Newcastle Jets
Adelaide United 1:1	Brisbane Roar

NYL Standings	
	P W D L F A D P
1 Perth Glory	10 6 3 1 24 17 7 21
2 Melbourne Heart	10 6 0 4 19 18 1 18
3 Brisbane Roar	10 5 3 2 27 21 6 18
4 Sydney FC	10 5 2 3 28 18 10 17
5 CC Mariners	10 5 1 4 19 11 8 16
6 Newcastle Jets	10 4 2 4 20 17 3 14
7 Gold Coast United	10 4 1 5 17 17 0 13
8 AIS	10 4 1 5 19 24 -5 13
9 Adelaide United	10 2 3 5 12 21 -9 9
10 Melbourne Victory	10 1 0 9 9 29 -20 3

Next Round	
Fri 13 Jan 12 5:00pm	Newcastle Jets Vs CC Mariners Adamstown Oval, Newcastle
Sat 14 Jan 12 3:00pm	Gold Coast United FC Vs AIS National Youth League Owen Park, Southport
Sat 14 Jan 12 4:30pm	Adelaide United Vs Melbourne Victory Burton Park
Sun 15 Jan 12 3:00pm	Brisbane Roar Vs Sydney FC Cleveland Showgrounds, Cleveland
Mon 16 Jan 12 10:00am	Melbourne Heart FC Vs Perth Glory John Cain Memorial Park, Thornbury

went over too. Redmayne made two brilliant saved on 89 minute to deny Kamay and Dion Kirk. Then with the last kick of the ball Quinn pounced on a poorly cleared ball to finish past Birghitti.

Canberra United clinch minor title

By FFA

Canberra United claimed the Westfield W-League premiership in emphatic fashion as their remarkable season continued with a 5-0 victory over Adelaide United.

The penultimate round win maintained Canberra's six-point margin and, with the bye next weekend, Jitka Klimkova's team are assured of becoming the first club to go through the regular season undefeated.

Brisbane Roar moved a step closer to claiming the remaining home semi-final with a crucial 3-1 victory on the road against Newcastle Jets, in a result which severely dents the home side's finals aspirations.

All eyes, however, were on the nation's capital and the Canberra juggernaut maintained momentum by racking up a club record winning margin.

Typically it was Michelle Heyman who led the way striking twice in the first half to take her season tally to 12, four clear of Melbourne Victory skipper Jodie Taylor.

Adelaide were resilient until the final stages and striker Rachael Quigley hit the post, before the floodgates opened. Taryn Hemmings bagged two in as many minutes, while Ashleigh Sykes added to the visitor's misery with an injury time goal.

In Newcastle the Jets entertained champions Brisbane Roar with semi-final ambitions on the line for both teams.

A tough and entertaining encounter ensued and it took the Roar until the latter stages of the match before asserting their dominance, and thus avoiding the possibility of an unthinkable failure to reach the top four.

Not for the first time this season Emily Gielnik made a goalscoring impact off the bench bagging two crucial goals to end the deadlock.

Earlier Lana Harch set Brisbane on their way with Linda O'Neill restoring parity early in the second period.



W-League action from Canberra United's 5-0 demolition of Adelaide United. Photo: ANN ODONG

The result leaves the Jets in fifth and requiring Melbourne Victory to stumble next week in Adelaide if they are to slip into fourth.

Brisbane, meanwhile, will need only a

draw when they entertain Sydney FC in an epic final round meeting where second spot will be on the line.

Sydney were in cruise control by half-time against Perth Glory thanks to a double



Canberra United are all smiles after taking out the minor premiership in convincing style. Photo: ANN ODONG



Canberra United's sharp shooter Michelle Heyman celebrates with Ashleigh Sykes. Photo: JOHN PUNSHON

Standings	
	P W D L F A D P
1 Canberra United	10 7 3 0 23 9 14 24
2 Brisbane Roar	9 5 3 1 19 11 8 18
3 Sydney FC	9 5 2 2 26 7 19 17
4 Melbourne Victory	9 4 2 3 17 8 9 14
5 Newcastle Jets	9 4 0 5 16 18 -2 12
6 Adelaide United	9 1 0 8 5 26 -21 3
7 Perth Glory	9 1 0 8 7 35 -28 3

Next Round	
14 Jan 12 2:00pm	Brisbane Roar Vs Sydney FC Queensland Sports & Athletics Centre, Nathan (QSAC)
14 Jan 12 4:00pm	Perth Glory Vs Newcastle Jets 6PR Stadium, Inglewood
15 Jan 12 3:00pm	Adelaide United Vs Melbourne Victory Burton Park
	Canberra United Vs Bye

Results	
Canberra United 5:0	Adelaide United FC
Newcastle Jets 1:3	Brisbane Roar
Perth Glory 0:3	Sydney FC
Melbourne Victory Vs	Bye

from Kyah Simon and an own goal from Tanya Oxtoby, with the 3-0 win booking their semi-final passage.

The Glory, to their credit, maintained their composure to keep the Sky Blues scoreless in the second stanza, in a performance which contrasted sharply with the nine-goal second-half blitz on the last occasion the pair met.



LEAGUE
PREMIERSHIP

On behalf of everyone at Futsal Oz we would like to extend the very best of wishes to all of our teams, participants, fans, sponsors and supporters. We look forward to seeing you all again in 2012.



NORTH MELBOURNE FC

LEAGUE & CUP DOUBLE

25 games. 23 wins. 2 draws



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SBS ONE
Sunday January 15th
10:30 AM Football Asia - Provides the latest news and updates of the various football leagues across Asia.

11:00 AM Les Murray's Football Feature - Highlights from FIFA Ballon D'Or 2011.

12:00 PM FIFA Futbol Mundial

Monday January 16th
04:30 PM FIFA Futbol Mundial
11:05 PM The World Game

SBS TWO
Monday January 16th
09:30 PM The World Game



Saturday 14-Jan
Scottish Premier League Round 23 St Johnstone v Rangers 11:25pm **LIVE**

Sunday 15-Jan
Scottish Premier League Round 23 Motherwell v Inverness 1:55am **LIVE**
Ligue 1 Round 20 Teams TBC 6:55am **LIVE**
Ligue 1 Round 20 Teams TBC 9:00am 1st Airing

Monday 16-Jan
Ligue 1 Round 20 Teams TBC 6:55am **LIVE**
Ligue 1 Round 20 Teams TBC 9:00am 1st Airing

Wednesday 18-Jan
FA Cup Round 3 Replay Teams TBC 6:30am **LIVE**

Thursday 19-Jan
FA Cup Round 3 Replay Teams TBC 6:30am **LIVE**
Cup Round 4 Replay Teams TBC 9:30am 1st Airing

Saturday 21-Jan
Bundesliga Round 18 Monchengladbach v Bayern Munich 6:25am **LIVE**
Scottish Premier League Round 24 St Mirren v Celtic 11:25pm **LIVE**

Sunday 22-Jan
Bundesliga Round 18 Kaiserslautern v Werder Bremen 8:45am 1st Airing
Eredivisie Round 18 Twente v RKC



The Futbol Town Show
Every Tuesday 7pm

Extra Time
Magazine Show
Every Tuesday 7.30pm

SMFC TV
Channel 31
Every Wed 7pm

The Green Gully Football Show
Every Saturday 10.30am

Friday 13th January
02:30 am Arsenal TV Arsenal V Leeds United
05:30 am FA Cup Classics Middlesbrough V Chesterfield Semi Final 96/97
06:00 am Serie A Matchday 17: Palermo V Napoli
08:00 am Serie A (Rpt) Matchday 17: Internazionale V Parma

Saturday 14th January
04:30 am The Serie A Highlights Show PG Matchday 17
05:00 am Magic Of The FA Cup Greatest Goals

Sunday 15th January
03:30 am Serie A Matchday 17: Palermo V Napoli

Monday 16th January
04:00 am The Serie A Highlights

Tuesday 17th January
03:30 am Serie A Matchday 17: Palermo V Napoli
05:30 am FA Cup Classics Middlesbrough V Chesterfield Semi Final 96/97
07:30 am The Serie A Highlights

Wednesday 18th January
03:00 am Arsenal TV Swansea V Arsenal

Thursday 19th January
03:30 am Serie A Matchday 18: A.C Milan V Inter Milan
05:30 am The Serie A Highlights PG Matchday 18

Wednesday 18th January
03:00 am Arsenal TV Swansea V Arsenal

Thursday 19th January
03:30 am Serie A Matchday 18: A.C Milan V Inter Milan
05:30 am The Serie A Highlights PG Matchday 18



ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE **LIVE**
Times listed are 7 minutes prior to kick-offs.

Week 23
Sun Jan 15 Tottenham v Wolves 1.53 am
Fox 1
Sun Jan 15 Man Utd v Bolton 1.53 am Fox 2
Sun Jan 15 Aston Villa v Everton 1.53 am Viewers Choice
Sun Jan 15 Chelsea v Sunderland 1.53 am Viewers Choice
Sun Jan 15 Liverpool v Stoke 1.53 am Viewers Choice
Sun Jan 15 West Brom v Norwich 1.53 am Viewers Choice
Sun Jan 15 Blackburn v Fulham 12.30 pm DELAY
Mon Jan 16 Newcastle v QPR 12.23 am Fox 1
Mon Jan 16 Swansea v Arsenal 2.53 am Fox 1
Tue Jan 17 Wigan v Man City 6.53 am Fox 1

ENGLISH CARLING CUP
Semi-Finals, Leg 1
Wed Jan 11 Crystal Palace v Cardiff 6.30 am
Thu Jan 12 Man City v Liverpool 6.40 am

ENGLISH FOOTBALL LEAGUE **LIVE**
Sun Jan 15 Watford v Reading 4.00 am Fox 1

A-LEAGUE **LIVE**
Fri Jan 13 Melbourne v Adelaide 8.00 pm
Sat Jan 14 Central Coast v Newcastle 5.30 pm
Sat Jan 14 Brisbane v Sydney 7.45 pm
Sun Jan 15 Melbourne Heart v Perth 4.00 pm
Sun Jan 15 Gold Coast v Wellington 6.30 pm

Victory Ladies Day a huge success



The inaugural Ladies Day was a success. Melbourne Victory young-guns **Jimmy Jeggo, Nick Ansell and Luke O'Dea** enjoy a hand-massage in the Ladies Day marquee before the team's win against the Newcastle Jets on Saturday night. Over 500 female Victory supporters attended the event, with many indulging in massages, manicures and make-overs. The purpose of the afternoon was for Melbourne Victory to celebrate involvement and support of women in sport. Photo: ANITA MILAS



Melbourne's George Cross was the winner in 1964 of the Australia Cup after downing APIA from Sydney by three goals to two in front of an estimated 15,000 at Olympic Park. Archie Campbell scored the winner in extra-time.

George Cross 1964 Players reunion



Sunshine George Cross invites all supporters to Chaplin Reserve on Thursday 19 January for a special player's re-union of players from the 1964 Australia Cup winning team. This was the club's greatest honour and it will be fantastic to have players like David Goldie, Hans Petersen, Bobby Adams, John McDaid, Joe Falzon, Tony Cassar, Lothar Kastner, Billy Copeland, Falconer Ireland, Eddie Azzopardi and John Brown in attendance for this re-union. Supporters, young and old are urged to come along and give these players a big welcome back to the club. It will be a very nostalgic night for all with plenty of reminiscing and stories told by all. The club will have meals available from 6.00 pm and the bar will be open. For further details contact Victor Brincat on 0447 549 771.

SEPARATED AT BIRTH



No need to look back in anger. Former French World Cup winner Zinedine Zidane and Sydney FC's Bruno Zazarine have more in common than they think. Seen any uncanny doppelgangers lately? Let us know on our facebook page and you could win a prize.

Short Passes

Heidelberg United Dinner
On the 4th of February Heidelberg United is staging a Champions Gala Night for all its championship & cup winning teams from the 60's, 70's, 80's, 90's, & 2000's

For booking details please call Nick on 0408317148.

Past champions that will be in attendance on the night include:

60's Era: Arthur Kriaris, Chris Economides, Lewis Yioannides

70's Era: Peter Blasby, Andy Bozikas, Alex Nitsopoulos, Mike Stogiannou, Jack Reilly

80's Era: Jamie Paton, Brian Garvey, John Metaxas, Terry Hennessey, Joe Angele, Alan Hunter, Andy O'Dell, Stuart Stevenson, Willie Raynes, Kon Pappas, John Kanesoulis, Steve Marley, Theo Selemidis, Stan Thodis, Chris Iliopoulos, Scott Patterson, Peter Tsolakis, John Anastasiadis, Charlie Yankos, Jeff Oliver

90's Era: Brian MacNicol, Gary Brattan, Doug Hodgson, Andy Vlahos, Gary McDowall, George Georgiadis, Leigh Tsoumerkas, Bobby Despotovski, Danny Gnjjidic, Ange Goutzoulis, Phil Stubbins, Michael Michalakopoulos

2000's Era: Jim Kourtis, Phil Stubbins, Eric Vassiliadis
Mile Medejovic, Nondas Manolitsis, Nicholas Schwall

Event Details:
Saturday 4th February, Peninsula @ Central Pier, 161 Harbour Esplanade, Docklands (opposite Edihad Stadium)
Cost: \$100 (inc dinner, beer wine & soft drinks)
Dress Code: Formal

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Gary Phillips, triple champion



BLAST FROM THE PAST



With Roy Hay

Nuggetty midfielder Gary Phillips was one of the most recognisable figures in the National Soccer League over fifteen seasons with Sydney Olympic and Brisbane Strikers, winning championships with both teams. When he finished playing he coached at the Queensland Academy of Sport and Sydney Olympic interspersed with spells in Tonga and Sabah in Malaysia. These days he has returned full circle to Coffs Harbour where he began. Among his other activities he acts a lifeguard on the beaches he used to surf in as a nipper.

Born on 9 June 1963, Gary Phillips played junior soccer in Coffs Harbour and represented the Australian schoolboys from 1979 to 1981. In 1982 Sydney Olympic picked up the talented youngster and he made his league debut in Round Four at Lambert Park against Sydney City on 7 March that year. Peter Raskopoulos had been sent off in the previous game and Doug Collins took a punt on the youngster. Mark Koussas put Olympic in front, but Eddie Thompson's league leaders hit back through Willie Murray and John Kosmina. Phillips had done enough to hold his place when Raskopoulos returned the following week and Olympic downed St George two-one. Olympic was a mid-table team in 1982 and 1983 but in 1984 when the league was split into two confer-

ences, Olympic downed Sydney City in the Northern Division final, only to fall at the final hurdle against South Melbourne Hellas, their Greek rivals from Melbourne.

Manfred Schaefer coached the side that year and the squad included Gary Meier, Tony Dakos, Mike Coady, Graham Jennings, Gary Phillips, Martyn Rogers, Peter Raskopoulos, Peter Katholos, Jim Patikas, Chris Kalantzis, Mark Koussas, Nick Theodorakopoulos and Marshall Soper.

In 1989-90, the first season of summer soccer in the NSL, it was Olympic's turn to take the title. By then there was only one division and Olympic squeaked into the play-offs in fifth spot on goal difference from APIA Leichardt. Adelaide City, South Melbourne and Melbourne Knights were accounted for by one-goal margins on the way to the grand final, where Marconi were downed two-nil. Alastair Edwards and Robbie Ironside scored for Olympic and Gary Phillips had his first championship medal. At the end of the 1992-93 season Phillips had a spell with Stanmore in the New South Wales State League, but Brisbane Strikers who had propped up the league in 1992-93 came in for him.

Strikers moved steadily up the league in the next four years, reaching the play-offs in 1996. In 1996-97, Frank Farina returned from Europe as player-coach and the Strikers fin-

ished second on the home and away ladder. Gary Phillips notched up 18 games and scored one goal.

He came on as a substitute at half-time in the semi-final when Sean Cranney's goal secured the spot in the grand final. In front of 40,446 fans the Strikers beat Sydney United two-nil with goals by Farina and Rod Brown. Though Gary did not kick a ball in the final he was an integral part of his second championship. In all he played 356 games in the NSL and scored 15 goals.

From 1999 to 2001 he was the coach at the Queensland Academy of Sport bringing through a number of the players who are making their way in the game despite the hiatus when the NSL was closed down in 2004. Matthew McKay is now established in the Socceroos and is currently with Glasgow Rangers in Scotland.

Phillips had a spell in Tonga and then in 2001 he returned to Olympic as coach and led the team to the title in 2002. Olympic finished the regular season 15 points behind Perth Glory but crushed Melbourne Knights by six-two, beat South Melbourne two-one and Newcastle United one-nil on the way to the grand final. A single strike by Ante Milicic three minutes into the second half deprived Perth of the title at Subiaco, once again in front of over 42,000 fans.

Phillips' squad included Clint Bolton, Paul Kohler, Lindsay Wilson, Tom Pondeljak, Dylan Macallister, Elias Demourtzidis, Troy Halpin, Jade North, Greg Owens Jeremy Harris, Nick Carle, Andrew Packer, Andrew Durante and Sebastian Sinozic.

He parted company with Olympic the following year and later worked for the Asian Football Confederation and in 2009 took over the Sabah FA team, helping them gain promotion to the Premier League in his first season. Always keen to promote the game he carved out a media reputation in Malaysia and is still good for an incisive comment on the game he decorated for so many years.



Gary Phillips controls the ball ahead of Oscar Crino and Kenny Murphy. Photo: Les Shorrock collection, Deakin University Library.



Gary Phillips and Jim Patikas in action against JUST. Photo: Les Shorrock collection, Deakin University Library.



Gary Phillips grimaces as he goes up for a header against South Melbourne goalkeeper Peter Laumets. Arthur Xanthopoulos stands guard from behind. Photo: Les Shorrock collection, Deakin University Library.

Epworth ABI Cup

Epworth
Medical
Foundation



Epworth ABI Cup Giving Road Trauma Victims a Second Chance

Guests will hear from an expert football panel comprising of Melbourne Victory Captain Adrian Leijer and Coach Mehmet Durakovic together with their Central Coast counterparts, Alex Wilkinson and Graham Arnold. They will discuss the upcoming A-League match and their support for the Epworth ABI Cup. In addition to the football panel, experts from Epworth HealthCare, the TAC and Victoria Police (Road Safety) will speak on the impact of road trauma in our community.

Fundraising Breakfast

Victory Room, Level 1, Etihad Stadium

7.30am - 9.30am

Thursday 9 February 2012

(Carpark entry A, Bourke Street)

\$80 per person or \$750 for a table of ten

RSVP

For breakfast by Thursday 2 February to Jayne Coates by returning your completed RSVP slip (right) to

Epworth Medical Foundation

89 Bridge Road Richmond VIC 3121

Phone 03 9426 6132 Fax 03 9427 9253

Email jayne.coates@epworth.org.au



Epworth ABI Cup Breakfast

RSVP

☐ I would like to purchase _____
ticket(s) or _____ table(s) of 10

☐ I am unable to attend but please
accept my donation

Herewith total payment of \$ _____
by cheque or credit card below

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Please seat me with: _____

Credit card details for:

☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa ☐ Amex ☐ Diners

Card no _____

Expiry _____

Cardholder _____

Signature _____



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MACKENZIE AT LARGE

With Craig MacKenzie

NEWS last week that Football Federation Victoria had appointed Ahmed Dini to the position of Community Engagement Officer has been widely embraced.

The 24-year-old Somali migrant is the recent recipient of the 2012 Victorian Local Hero award for his efforts in leading the integration of newly arrived Somali refugees in Victoria.

Dini's appointment is part of FFV's United Through Football initiative and the federation already has tipped in over \$110,000 into the program to assist around 40 community clubs and over 3000 newly arrived individuals, predominately from Horn of Africa countries such as Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia, to participate in football.

Dini arrived here as a 10-year-old after enduring the challenges of living in a refugee camp and in 2007 was Mooney Valley council's youth citizen of the year.

But assimilating into the local culture was no simple task. In that same year, Dini had to endure a 10-day court appearance before eventually being found not guilty of police charges of affray, assault and recklessly causing injury.

In October 2009, he pleaded guilty to a charge of affray relating to a fight on New Year's Eve the previous year. He was one of four men charged. One of the men suffered a machete wound to the face.

Chief Magistrate Ian Gray placed Dini and his co-accused on one-year community-based orders and instructed them to complete 50 hours of community work as their punishment.

Importantly, the magistrate did not record convictions against their names and urged all four to become leaders in their community rather than ending up in jail.

Well may you ask why these matters are raised here but it's simply because I want to laud FFV for giving Dini the same chance that magistrate Gray gave him a couple of years back.

"The relevant FFV personnel were fully aware of the situation facing Ahmed

in 2009 when they appointed him to his new role," said new FFV communications manager Gordon Irving.

"This incident happened more than two years ago and perhaps Ahmed has taken on board what the judge said at the time and is turning his life around, determined to be a leader in his community.

"FFV would like to support him in those endeavours."

Dini's appointment was announced by FFV Game Development Manager Salv Carmusciano at the recent Australian Somali Football Championship, which was spearheaded by Dini and has now become an annual event.

Dini officially joins FFV from mid January and I'm sure my colleagues at GW join with me in welcoming him to our football family.

German honour for Irvine

JACKSON Irvine didn't take long to make his mark after returning to Glasgow following a brief festive season visit to his family home in Melbourne.

The Lysterfield traveller was named Player of the Tournament at the prestigious Mercedes-Benz Junior Cup in Stuttgart last week.

Celtic was invited to the annual six-a-side event for under-19 teams along with FSV Mainz 05 (eventual winner), Hamburger SV, Lazio, VfB Stuttgart, SC Freiburg, Lechia Danzig and the US national side.

Celtic lost all three of its opening day encounters but finished the two-day event strongly with wins over Stuttgart and the US.

But from an Aussie perspective Irvine's personal success was a tournament highlight.

The teenager has only recently committed himself to playing for Australia after three appearances for Scotland in the European Under-19 Championships last year.

Celtic coach John Kennedy said that Irvine was a thoroughly deserving recipient of the award and felt there had been several excellent performers

FFV finds new Local Hero

in Celtic colours, also giving special mention to Callum McGregor.

"I thought Jackson Irvine and Callum McGregor were two of the best players in the tournament, and I said that after the final game before we knew that Jackson had won it," he told Mark Henderson of celticfc.net.

"Our only concern was that we hadn't finished high enough to merit them achieving that, but he obviously made such a good impression throughout the tournament, that they've gone with him anyway. I was delighted for him, he thoroughly deserved it.

"Personally, I thought it could have been a pick between him or Callum ... I would have said those two were the pick of the bunch out of the whole tournament."

Kennedy also recognised the huge steps forward that Irvine has taken at Celtic.

"He's progressed very well this season," said Kennedy. "He's in the Development Team now and has been captaining the 19s team.

"He also made his international debut with the Scotland U19 team. It's been a big season for him so far, so he just has to keep working and progressing.

"He just has to keep making steps forward all the time and hopefully he carries that on and he might get a bite at the first team in the future."

Eagles have lofty ambitions

THIS publication always has prided itself on its coverage of grassroots football so let me tell you about Baxter Soccer Club based in Melbourne's peninsula region.

The senior and reserves sides played in Provisional Three South-East last season, their first under the auspices of FFV. Prior to that they had been playing in the Bayside Leagues.

Baxter's application in late 2010 to play under the FFV banner was spearheaded by a \$1.2 million grant for new clubrooms. That seven-figure sum comprised \$100,000 from the Victorian state government, \$120,000 from the club itself and the remainder from Frankston City Council.

Fast forward to the present and Baxter now has the best clubrooms of any football club on the peninsula.

It is particularly proud of its dedicated female changing rooms and



2012 Victorian Local Hero award winner Ahmed Dini, newly appointed FFV Community Engagement Officer. Photo courtesy www.australianoftheyear.org.au.



Jackson Irvine is awarded the Player of the Tournament at the Mercedes-Benz Junior Cup in Germany last week.

showers and is keen to grow the girls and women's side of the club. But Baxter also aims to kick goals on the pitch as well as off.

"The aim this year is simple – win promotion," said senior men's coach Jim Morrison, former Langwarrin assistant coach.

"Last year it was all about staying in the division and the club was pleased with our sixth-placed finish but it's important that the players know that we could have finished higher.

"We need to add a couple of experienced players to the squad and hopefully we can get players in that know how to win.

"We've got a few players down already to pre-season training but I don't want to name them at this stage."

The only potential signing that Morrison would name is ex-Langwarrin player Daniel Etheridge, who can play in a central midfield role or wide left.

John Bookless has been appointed as reserves coach while Eric Scott is coach of the senior women's team.

Morrison already has teed up practice matches against Langwarrin, Skye United, Seaford United, Keysborough and Knox City. For venues and dates of these games go the club's website at www.baxtersoccerclub.org.au.

The junior wing of the club is strong with teams from under-7 to under-18 levels but new players are always welcome.

The main registration day is Sunday 12 February from 11am to 2pm at Baxter Park. Registrations can be arranged now with early bird discount rates available. Further details can be gleaned by emailing Julie Henderson at registrar@baxtersoccerclub.org.au. "We're a family-focused club," said club spokesperson Kelly Roberts.

"We want to see participants developing their soccer skills in a positive and confident manner and we welcome players of all skill levels and ages."

Roberts also is organising function room hire for members, which includes use of the club's fully licenced bar facilities.

For information regarding hire fees and available dates Roberts can be emailed at k.maycock@hotmail.com.

This has been a community service announcement on behalf of Baxter Eagles SC and absolutely nothing to do with the fact that Morrison is a pal.

Baxter Eagles' \$1.2 million clubrooms at Baxter Park.



An insider's view of the club's impressive function room.

Thank God It's Friday...

GW now available at all good newsagents every Friday

Also available at Heart & Victory & Jets & Adelaide home games



Football Piracy: Time For TV To Think Outside The Box

By Leroy Robinson

Ever since the internet took off many, many years ago there have been problems with piracy. Most of these problems have affected the music industry, but over the past few years the entertainment industry has seen wholesale piracy of their products, potentially costing them billions of pounds. It is no surprise that football has been affected by this too.

In all honesty football and films have always been targeted by pirates. The reason is fairly simple: people are willing to pay more to watch sports and movies than other products.

In the UK it started in the late 1990s when satellite receivers could be bought that allowed access to a package of premium channels. In the UK the people who supplied the ONDigital package went out of business because their encryptions were so weak that with a tiny bit of technical know-how anyone could watch their channels without paying.

Although this is an extreme case it just goes to show that getting your encryption right is very important. Sky TV in the UK takes any attempts at piracy very seriously and has a legion of programmers keeping one step ahead of the pirates. Of course there is only so much that Sky can do on these shores, and so pirates have over the years turned to hacking foreign packages. You see the Premier League is shown in almost every country in Europe and many of these packages include dual commentary in English so if a pirate can hack a package in, say Romania, then they get the same games as we do in England (usually more actually) and do not have to pay for them. In general, encryptions are much tighter now so a lot of pirates have turned to card sharing.

Card sharing is when someone with a legitimate satellite TV package shares that subscription over a network or server with others. There are people with Sky UK subscriptions over here that offer all the channels (including HD channels) for £12 a month. Bear in mind that the original subscription is around £70 and you'll understand why Sky is starting to take this form of piracy seriously. Also, it is worth considering that these card sharers usually have many people using their services, meaning they can make a full-time income from the proceeds. In many respects, this is no different from one of the most popular ways of getting Premier League games for free: through peer to peer (P2P) streaming websites. At this juncture, it is worth stating that the biggest factor in the rise of streaming sites is the faster broadband speeds which allow for increased picture



quality. The mainstream press first caught up with this phenomenon a few years ago, because of a website called justin.tv. As usual, they were way behind the game, just like they are with card sharing. The difference between card sharing and using P2P sites is that P2P sites are free and they often but not always suffer from a lack of quality. In response to this, the Premier League has been able to take down the streams for copyright violation, but the problem is they just keep coming back up again. If you check out some of these sites they are no more than a cheap site someone has set-up to make cash. How? They get paid for showing the 30 second promotional clips you sometimes get before the stream starts. They get paid by Google for AdSense and they get paid for the pop-up ads. And no, the advertisers don't care so much about this illegal activity because they only care about

eyeballs seeing their ads. So what the Premier League has, from what I can see, is go after the websites that provide links to these illegal streams. Myp2p.eu was one of the most popular sites. It covered many sports which you could watch for free on your computer. Obviously, football is the most popular but the point is they gave links to various leagues around Europe. The site is closed down now, or at least the domain is down. The providers of myp2p.eu changed their website address and now that is down too. We could be approaching a new era in piracy but usually pirates have ways around these things. For example, on Saturday anyone who knew where to go could watch Liverpool-Stoke, as well as two Spanish La Liga games, on a computer with a pretty good (meaning standard definition) quality picture. And anyone with Sopcast can still watch Premier League football – and

with English commentary too. The problem the Premier League has is that Sopcast is just a piece of software that allows any Tom, Dick or Harry to watch or broadcast on the internet. The only things the authorities can do is try and take down each server individually (time-consuming) or try and ban the software (unlikely). UEFA also have the same problem and seem to be addressing it in the same way as the English. A lot of the piracy in the UK, as I see it, comes down to the excessive cost of watching football on TV. Yes, there will always be people who want something for free, but there are people that want to watch and want to go through official channels but £600 a year is just too expensive. Don't get me wrong, I'm not advocating piracy and I understand that the quality of the service has improved. I just feel they should try and be more flexible and a little cheaper in the UK. Sky

Germany's football package is £20 a month and in the UK it is £40. Yes, the product might be better but is it twice as good? The solution, in my mind, is for companies to provide an internet service that coexists alongside the satellite service. There are film services which offer this service and they are very popular. The idea is simple: for a fixed fee you can watch certain sports channels online. In America they do this for baseball and for other sports. It runs separate to your TV subscription and allows you to watch a game wherever you are in the world. There is a real need for high quality streaming from official sources but currently Sky offer a streaming service only for Sky Sports subscribers - meaning you shell out £40 a month for the satellite service and get online streaming free. Why not offer a streaming service for half the price to all non-subscribers? I'll tell you why not, because they are

greedy. They've jacked up prices to business customers (i.e. pubs) to such an extent that many pubs where I live do not have football and the one's that do insist you buy at least two drinks (alcoholic one's) so they can at least make some money. This means that whilst Sky continues to see more and more people subscribe to their services, they will also lose out because there will be those customers who would rather use card sharing services or watch illegal streams. The poor sound and picture quality of some streams means this niche is ripe for the picking. Yes, some people will use an HDMI cable to watch on their TV but so what? It's still not the same as watching on the TV so it shouldn't be a direct competitor. It's time for TV companies to think outside the box.

Sources: sky.com sky.de



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El Sueño Libertador - (The Libertadores dream)

Latin Wrap



Francis Fields

It is important coming into the new year and the new seasons across different leagues to remind of the importance and prestige the Copa Libertadores is all about.

The Copa Libertadores is the most important club tournament and objective for Latin American clubs. With it comes the folklore, the fanfare and the organisation of the many people from across the countries that help the Libertadores each year become what it is.

Governing body CONMEBOL held the draw last November 25 in Luque, Paraguay with the tournament commencing on the 24th of January.

Just for a bit of background, this week's Latin wrap feature touches on the cultural influence the Copa Libertadores impacts on the continent.

It is known simply as the Copa Libertadores and was originally known as the Copa Campeones de América (Champions of America Cup). As an annual international club football competition organized by CONMEBOL since 1960, it is the most prestigious club competition in South American football and one of the most watched events in the world, broadcast in 135 nations worldwide.

The tournament is named in honor of the Libertadores (the Liberators) or the main leaders of the South American wars of independence. The competition has had several different formats over its lifetime. Initially, only the champions of the South American leagues participated. In 1966, the runners-up of the South American leagues began to join; in 1998, Mexican teams were invited to compete. Today at least three clubs per country compete in the tournament, while Argentina and Brazil each have five clubs participating. Traditionally, a group stage has always been used but the amount of teams per group has varied several times.

The tournament consists of six stages. In the present format, it begins in early February with the first stage. The six surviving teams from the first stage join 26 teams in the second stage, in which there are eight groups consisting of four teams each. The eight group winners and eight runners-up enter the final four stages, better known as the knockout stages, which ends with the finals anywhere between June and August. The winner of the Copa Libertadores becomes eligible to play in two extra tournaments: the FIFA Club World Cup and the Recopa Sudamericana.

The reigning champion of the competition is Brazilian club Santos. Argentine club Independiente is the most successful club in the cup history, having won the tournament seven times. Argentine clubs have accumulated the most amount of victories with 22 wins while Brazil has the largest number of different winning teams, with a total of eight clubs having won the title. The cup has been won by 22 different clubs and won consecutively by six clubs, most recently by Boca Juniors in 2001.

As Australians are travelling more and more to the continent, the need to understand about the "Sueño Libertador" involves the dream and the long road 38 clubs from 11 associations will contest in this year's edition.

It is the right that every club that has won its respective national league gets to compete in.

Back in 1998 for example, Brazil's Vasco da Gama spent \$10 million to win the tournament and in 1998, Palmeiras - also of Brazil and managed at the time by Luiz Felipe Scolari successfully won the 1999 edition by bringing Brazilian players from Europe such as defender Junior Baiano and others.

As for its importance, players from Mexican club Chivas of Guadalajara expressed their desire to play in 2010 edition final (losing to Internacional de Porto Alegre) than appear in a friendly international for the Mexico national team against World Cup holders Spain and even dispute the Mexican national tournaments - the opening Apertura and the closing Clausura.

Another example was Santos - the current holders to whom its players stated after their 2010 Copa do Brasil triumph that they would rather stay in the club and participate in the 2011 Copa Libertadores despite million-dollar offers to participate in clubs throughout Europe and in the UEFA Champions League.

Former Boca Juniors goalkeeper and Colombian international Óscar Córdoba stated that winning the Copa Libertadores was the most important trophy he attained above winning the Argentine league and Intercontinental Cup in Japan.

"La Copa se mira y no se toca"
Since its inception in 1960, the Copa Libertadores had predominantly been passed around clubs from nations with an Atlantic coast: Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay. The first team who broke this record was Olimpia of Paraguay, becoming the first team outside of those nations to win the Copa Libertadores when they triumphed in 1979.

The first club from a country with a Pacific coast to reach a final was Lima giant Universitario de Deportes of Peru. The cremas lost in 1972 against Independiente of Avellaneda from of Argentina. The following year, Independiente defeated Colo-Colo of Chile in a controversial three-legged series. The Chilean giants, another regarded "Pacific" team, created a myth that the trophy would never go to the west, giving birth to the saying, "La Copa se mira y no se toca" (The Cup is watched and not touched).

In 1989 however, Colombian side Atlético Nacional of Medellín won the Libertadores in 1989 becoming the first national from the Pacific, in this case Colombia with its beautiful coastline on the Pacific Ocean to win the tournament. Other clubs with Pacific coastlines who have won the tournament are Liga de Quito of Ecuador in 2008, Colo-Colo of Chile in 1991 and Once Caldas from Manizales, Colombia who won the title in 2004.

The trophy
The tournament shares its name with the trophy, also called the Copa Libertadores or simply la Copa, which is awarded to the Copa Libertadores winner. It was designed by Italian designer Alberto de Gasperi, an immigrant of Peru, in Camusso Jewelry of Lima (owned by Gasperi) at the behest of CONMEBOL.

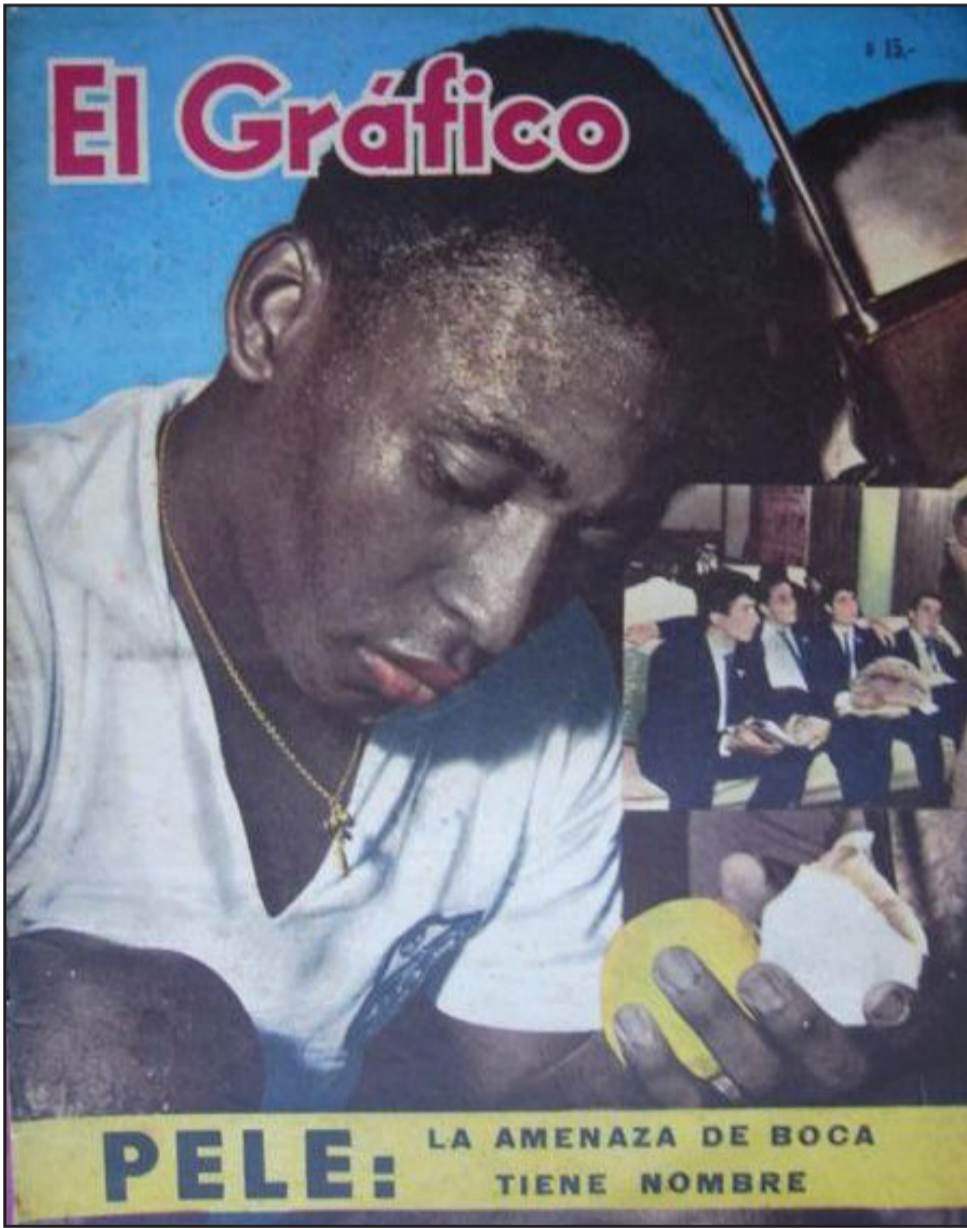
The top of the laurel is made of sterling silver, with the exception of the football player at the top (it is made of bronze with a silver coating). The pedestal, which contains badges from every winner of the competition, is made of hardwood plywood. The badges provides the year of the edition, the full name of the winning club, the city that the club comes from and the nation. To the left of that information is the club logo. The current trophy is the third in the history of the competition; in 1970, Estudiantes's third victory in the tournament entitled them to keep the original trophy permanently. Independiente won the second trophy in 1974 after winning the competition for the third consecutive time.

Qualification to the Libertadores
As of 2009, most teams qualify to the Copa Libertadores by winning half-year tournaments called the Apertura and Clausura tournaments or by finishing among the top teams in their championship.

The countries that use this format are Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia,



Danilo and Bruno Rodrigo for Santos playing in the Copa Libertadores 2011 final, shown marking Luis Aguair of Uruguay's Peñarol at the giant Centenario stadium



The legendary Pelé shown in a cover of the well-known Argentine sports magazine El Gráfico during his glory days with Santos in the Copa Libertadores

Mexico, Paraguay and Venezuela. Peru and Ecuador have developed new formats for qualification to the Copa Libertadores involving several stages. Brazil is the only South American league to use a European league format instead of the Apertura and Clausura format. However, one berth for the Copa Libertadores can be won by winning the Copa do Brasil (the Brazilian cup).

Peru, Uruguay and Mexico used a second tournament to determine who qualifies to the Libertadores (the "Liguilla Pre-Libertadores" since 1992 to 1997, the "Liguilla Pre-Libertadores de América" since 1974 to 2009, and the InterLiga from 2004 to 2010, respectively).

Chile still uses a competition to determine a Copa Libertadores participant,

the "Liguilla para Copa Libertadores" (a qualifying play-off). Argentina used an analogous method only once in 1992. Starting in 2011, the winner of the Copa Sudamericana will qualify directly to the following Copa Libertadores which for 2012 is Universidad de Chile.

The competitors of the 2011 edition will be distributed as follows:

- The defending champion
- The Copa Sudamericana champion
- 5 from Argentina and Brazil
- 3 from Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela each
- 3 invitees from Mexico (CONCACAF association member)

Unlike the nation containing the defending champion, the country of the Copa Sudamericana champion does not gain an extra berth to the tournament.

First stage of the Copa Libertadores for 2012

The First stage will begin on January 24 and end on February 2.

Sport Huancayo (Peru) vs Arsenal (Argentina)
1st leg Jan 24 2nd leg Jan 31

Flamengo (Brazil) vs Real Potosi (Bolivia)
1st leg Jan 25 2nd leg Feb 1

Caracas (Venezuela) vs Peñarol (Uruguay)
1st leg Jan 26 2nd leg Feb 2

Libertad (Paraguay) vs El Nacional (Ecuador)
1st leg Jan 24 2nd leg Jan 31

Once Caldas (Colombia) vs Internacional (Brazil)
1st leg Jan 25 2nd leg Feb 1

Tigres UANL (Mexico) vs Unión Española (Chile)
1st leg Jan 25 2nd leg Feb 2

The Second Stage, played in a home-and-away round-robin format as usual begins on February 7 and will end on April 19, 2012. The top two teams from each group will advance to the Round of 16.

Coverage of the Copa Libertadores in Australia will be with Setanta Sports with all matches live. In the United Kingdom, the Libertadores is televised by Premier Sports with 35 matches broadcast live for this year's edition.

The 'Ai si eu te pego' craze

Neymar danced into the 'Ai si eu te pego' that has been the craze for the past year. The singer is Michel Teló and it is a pity the song has not reached a mainstream acceptance in other parts of the world, however it is surely very, very well known. There is also a remix with Romanian artist Inna.

When the Brazilian starlet was in Japan for the Club World Cup, videos went viral of his dressing-room antics among his Santos teammates. The youngster was shown dancing to the song in such a way, with such charisma it began to contagiously distract his teammates who later began to laugh and follow the dance move.

The single sung the by Brazilian singer and composer was also released in Spain as a digital download on 22 November 2011 hitting several La Liga pitches with goal celebrations.

Not only was Neymar invited to one of Teló's concerts, it also became extremely popular in the Iberian peninsula after Real Madrid players Marcelo and Cristiano Ronaldo celebrated a goal dancing to the choreography of the song.

After that the "Ai Se Eu Te Pego" goal celebration, it spread to other European leagues. Since then it has been performed by Marco Reus of Borussia Mönchengladbach and Lewis Holtby of Schalke 04 in the Bundesliga, Panathinaikos players Cleiton and Sebastián Leto in the Greek Superleague have also danced to it.

Brazilian forward Vagner Love of CSKA Moscow in the Russian Premier League did it, Alexandre Pato, Robinho, Thiago Silva and Kevin-Prince Boateng of AC Milan in Italy's Serie A, the list goes on with the craze, with John Guidetti from Feyenoord in the Dutch Eredivisie, Adrian Mutu and Éder from Cesena also in Serie A and André Santos of Arsenal in the English Premier League. In Paraguay, Cerro Porteño's Edgar Benítez also stunned his teammates and fans with the moves.

When you get the chance, search for the official video on Youtube, though a warning that the song and dance is highly contagious. A pre-requisite would be to score a goal as well.

Documentary "El Otro Fútbol"

On an interesting note, documentary filmmaker Federico Peretti has produced "El Otro Fútbol" (The Other Football) which showcases a brilliant take on what football is like in the lower division, from the stands, from the terraces, as a coach, as a referee, as a commentator - basically what the game is like off the field or when not as a player.

The trailer is available for watching on vimeo.com by searching up the aforementioned title and author name. It will be released later in 2012.

The return of the king must not halt Wenger's spending



It's a feeling that thousands packed into stadiums dream of week after week, but will never get the chance to experience it. Scoring for the team you love, the team you support. But one Arsenal fan at the Emirates Stadium on Monday night got that rare opportunity to do just that - although this fan is slightly different to most other fans. His name is Thierry Henry.

The 34-year old Frenchman re-joined the gunners last Friday and was registered in time to make his second debut for the Londoners against Leeds United, in the FA Cup 3rd round - a repeat of last season's fixture at this stage of the competition. The club's all-time leading goalscorer extended his tally to 227 goals for Arsenal, coming off the bench and scoring with a trademark finish, 10 minutes after coming on. A goal that sent the Emirates in to carnival mode. "Now I know how people feel when they score for the club they support," Henry expressed to the media shortly after leaving the field. It was quite a sight at the full-time whistle, one that maybe not too many could envisage. The former Barcelona forward stood near the centre of the pitch lifting his arms aloft in jubilation and achievement, looking up to the heavens as if to thank God for this special moment. This is a guy who's CV has very few blemishes. A winner of titles and cups in England, Spain and France, as well as the Champions League, European Championships and the most prestigious of all, the World cup, the Les Ulis-born star has, as Arsene Wenger put it at his pre-match press conference "won everything there is to win". And yet this modest scenario - in the context of a career like Henry's - of scoring an FA Cup 3rd round goal, appeared to bring the striker into almost unprecedented joy. Henry's goal celebration revoked memories of his first stay with the club, when he would so often follow a goal with a display of exuberance and passion. You only need to take a walk outside the stadium and appreciate the great man's statue, which depicts the club legend celebrating on his knees after scoring the 2002/2003 Premier League goal of the season against arch-rivals Tottenham Hotspur. On Monday evening, it was almost as if Spurs were the visitors, and the veteran Frenchman had just netted a last-minute winner. His post-goal elations took him all the way over to the Arsenal dugout, where he embraced Wenger and fitness coach Tony Colbert. It was a fitting scene, but it must not stimulate negligence from the Arsenal manager. Into his 16th year in charge of the club, Wenger's reign has never been examined as closely as this before.



Arsenal's Thierry Henry celebrates at the final whistle after his comeback goal had knocked Leeds United out of the FA Cup.

The 62-year old endured a departure of upheaval and turmoil, followed by last-minute signings, viewed in the English media as "panic signings" - a view which has since been proven wrong by in large. But Henry's arrival on a 2-month loan can not halt Wenger's spending - it simply can not. It mustn't. For the first time in the Wenger era, the gunners are genuinely facing the

unnerving prospect of no Champions League football next term. Currently in 5th position, and facing an unprecedented full-back injury crisis (the club had potential full-backs injured against Leeds) the Arsenal fans have called on Le Professeur to do what he seemingly dislikes most, spending money. Borussia Monchengladbach and Germany forward Marco Reus rejected

a move to North London earlier this month in favour of signing a pre-contract with Borussia Dortmund, where he will move in the summer, whilst Lukas Podolski, Reus' international team-mate, has ruled out leaving FC Koln until June. Two of Wenger's supposed top targets gone. Speculation in Belgium on Tuesday morning was rife regarding the future of the highly-rated

Anderlecht forward Matias Suarez. The Argentinian is reportedly set to join the gunners at the end of the campaign for a fee in the region of £9m - any potential January move was halted by the lack of a work permit. Meanwhile, rumours in France on the same day expressed that Wenger was close to concluding a deal for Lyon left-back Aly Cissokho. The Former Porto defender had a tough time in Ligue 1, and could be set to play the second part of the season on loan at the Emirates. His arrival would certainly help with the full-back issues, but Wenger has had to put up with in recent months.

But rumours are just that - rumours. Arsenal need official transfers. The most ardent gooners will tell you that their club already has enough at their disposal to guarantee a top-four finish, particularly when a whole host of defenders, and midfield prodigy Jack Wilshere return to fitness. But realists will point out the truth. Arsenal suffered in the summer, maybe more so than any other in recent times. Wenger needs to spend quickly or face more interrogating questions regarding his reign.

"For us, the Champions League and FA Cup are not comparable. The Champions League is compulsory. The FA Cup is something that is for enjoyment." This from a man who has not lifted silverware in seven years. In four months time, the Arsenal manager may have neither trophies or top-level European football. It's time to splash the cash Arsene.



Robert Davis

The FA Cup took precedence last weekend and once again raised questions of its importance to not only the big Premiership teams, but seemingly every team taking part above League One.

Many football fans and journalists talk about the 'magic' of the competition. "It's not there anymore", "The 'magic' has gone." Just a few quotes from a few message boards I've stumbled across, seeing what other fans think of the apparent decline of the cup.

What this 'magic' is I'm not quite sure. Has anything else lost it's magic? Or for that matter, has anything else gained some magic?

What has happened to the FA Cup is it's lost credibility, and it doesn't help when the oldest footballing cup competition in the world is sponsored by soccer loving American's favourite beer Budweiser.

That doesn't seem to be the real problem though. As football fan's, I think we've accepted that sponsorships

The 'Magic' Of The FA Cup

from all over the world have cemented their place in watering down the game.

In more footballing terms, the cup is still recovering from the decision to exclude treble winners Manchester United from the competition in the 99/00 season.

Along with AC Milan and Real Madrid, United were the biggest club in the world, and having just won The Champions League, were now obliged to take part in the incredibly uninteresting yet money swindling World Team Championship in Brazil.

The hectic schedule meant that Alex Ferguson's side would have to ditch one of the competitions. The Football Association at the time was readying a bid for England to host the 2006 World Cup, and took it upon themselves to offer United a route out of the FA Cup, hoping their participation in the more globally televised World Team Championship would help them win the bid. We of course didn't win the bid.

Allowing the biggest team in the country at the time to be excluded from the competition allowed other teams to see the competition as somewhat less important. More and more increasingly it is acceptable to put out a weakened side, constantly given a tag by managers of 'youth and fringe players being

given a chance.'

The repercussions of the decision have certainly affected the cup.

Attendances this year were clearly lacking, with The Guardian reporting a drop of 80,000 fans, comparing FA Cup attendances to that of a teams regular league attendance. Newcastle United, Derby County and West Bromwich Albion all had drops of over 10,000, whilst of all 32 matches played this week, only eight teams recorded increases of attendances. The eight teams that did record an increase all came from League One or below and played a team that was at least a league above them.

With this in mind, the FA Cup does seem to be going through some sort of resurgence. Through the help of 'magic' or not, I no longer feel disappointed that a whole week of league football is missed because of the FA Cup.

The attendances may not be consistent, but the amount of coverage the competition receives has always remained the same. Players arrive from different countries and talk about watching the FA Cup as a child, remembering memorable upsets and dreaming of scoring in a cup final. There is no other domestic cup competition in the whole of Europe that

provides the intensity and drama that the FA cup provides.

So for me, the FA cup hasn't lost any magic, or even had any magic in the first place, it's just a competition going through some identity problems, sometimes looking a bit outdated to the rest of the fast paced footballing world. The FA Cup is a competition England can be proud of, and I don't think it will be long until we see improved attendances all around the country for the next generation of football fans to see the 'magic' of the FA Cup.

Warnock's luck runs out

The FA Cup sadly did not provide enough 'magic pixie dust' to save Neil Warnock from being sacked as manager of Queens Park Rangers. A decision that seems incredibly harsh considering Steve Kean remains in a job.

When QPR was taken over in the summer by Tony Fernandes, doubts were already being raised about Warnock's position at the club. A positive start soon fell away and they now find themselves one place above the relegation zone and struggling to score goals. The former Sheffield United and

Crystal Palace manager has a brilliant record in The Championship, and his only year managing in the Premiership was with Sheffield United back in 2006. He took a team that on paper looked certain for relegation that season and gave them a fighting chance, only to be relegated on the last day of the season thanks to West Ham United's surprise win at Old Trafford.

Warnock has never been a master tactician, with one former player saying that Warnock simply "doesn't do tactics." Football isn't just about tactics though, especially in England. Huge ego's need to be groomed and man management and motivation is becoming a more important trait to have as a manager. Warnock has both of these in abundance. He has always given off the impression of 'us against the world', a trait that has served Mourinho very well over the years.

Football under Warnock may not be the best in the land, but it's always exciting. The fans reaction to the sacking was strange. There was obvious gratitude for what he helped the club achieve, but many felt it was time for him to move on after a run of nine games without a win. Again, an incredibly harsh outcome for a manager that essentially stabilised the managerial

revolving door at Loftus Road and got Rangers promoted after 15 years away from the top flight.

Tony Fernandes clearly didn't want to take a chance and give Warnock money to spend in the January market if he felt the club was going in the wrong direction under Warnock's guidance.

He gave the vacant job to Mark Hughes. Someone with a bit more tactical knowledge, but is much less hands on with the players. Hughes' spell at Manchester City will help him deal with the likes of Adel Taarabt and Joey Barton, his previous experience in the league will certainly not be hindrance.

Will QPR have more of a chance of staying up with Hughes in charge? You would have to say on paper they do, but breaking up a team that Warnock had made so close over the past year could be catastrophic. Hughes will have his own ideas, and it's hard to see players like Jamie Mackie, Heidar Helguson and Shaun Derry still being a part of his plans in the future.

For Warnock, I hope he'll get another crack at managing in the top league. He will have to start again in The Championship if he does, and at 63, he may not feel he has the time left in management to do so. The Premiership will definitely miss Neil Warnock, the only people that won't miss him are the referees.

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Spurs emerge as genuine contenders

EPL Wrap



Steven Talevski

Tottenham Hotspurs have edged closer to the top of the Premier League table with a comfortable two nil victory over mid table Everton at White Hart Lane in a post-poned fixture.

Tottenham now move to equal points with Manchester United who remain second on goal difference and lay only three points behind top of the table Manchester City.

Goals either side of half time from Aaron Lennon and Benoit Assou-Ekotto were enough for the Spurs to get past the inconsistent Everton side who remain 11th on the table.

Although Tottenham's target may remain as clinching a berth in next season's European Champions League, Harry Redknapp has revealed he is interested in strengthening his squad during the January transfer window.

Marseille forward Loic Remy has been confirmed by Redknapp as a player that the club has monitored.

"He's a good player," Redknapp said. "He's a player we like and there's interest there.

"But that is as far [as it goes]. At the moment, there is nothing more than that."

Other players linked to Tottenham include Newcastle United striker Demba Ba, Blackburn captain Chris Samba and Juventus star Milos Krasic.

The spurs next host Wolverhampton Wolves who have not won a game in the Premier League in their last six matches.

Despite the run of poor form, Wolverhampton will go into the game with some good news as midfielder Nenad Milijas will return after his three game suspension for his controversial red card against Arsenal.



Steven Gerrard's penalty gives Liverpool a 1-0 victory in their Carling Cup semi-final first leg against Manchester City at Etihad Stadium on Wednesday.

Top of the table Manchester City will look to overcome their FA Cup exit to cross town rivals Manchester United when they visit the DW Stadium to face relegation threatened Wigan Athletic. Manchester City will be without Captain Vincent Kompany for four matches after his controversial red card against Manchester United was appealed and rejected by the FA, who doubled the original two game suspension. Kompany missed the mid-week first leg Carling Cup semi-final clash against Liverpool where a Steven Gerrard penalty was enough to separate the two sides and hand Liverpool a one nil lead.

Kompany will also miss the reverse Carling Cup semi-final tie along with this weekend's clash away to Wigan and the all-important match against title rivals Tottenham. Manchester United, who inflicted Manchester City's exit of the FA Cup with a 3-2 win away from home prepare to face Bolton at Old Trafford. However the major news coming out from Old Trafford is that Paul Scholes has come out of retirement, and came off the bench in the FA Cup third round win against Manchester City. Forward Wayne Rooney after the

match claimed that he had no idea that Scholes, who has been training with the United Reserve squad where he is part of the coaching staff, was coming out of retirement. "I was surprised. We didn't find out until we got in the dressing room and saw him getting changed" Rooney said. "It is obviously great as he's a great footballer and is a very experienced player. He brought a bit of calmness to our play towards the end of the game which helped us see it out." Chelsea, who is now 11 points behind top of the table Manchester City and eight behind Manchester United and Tottenham, will look to launch their unlikely title hunt when they host inform Sunderland at Stamford Bridge. The Black Cats under new manager Martin O'Neil are undefeated since their one nil loss to Tottenham on the 18th of December and have moved from 16th to tenth on the Premier League table since O'Neil took over in early December. Other European place contenders Arsenal travel to Swansea City with a fit Thierry Henry expected to make his Premier League return for the Gunners since his departure from the club

in 2007. The on-loan club icon made his return to the Emirates Stadium this past weekend when he came on to score the game's only goal against Leeds United in Arsenal's third round FA Cup clash to provide a fairy-tale ending to the game. After the game Henry revealed the goal felt like a dream. "Scoring a winner for the club that I love, I am actually dreaming right now," Henry said after the game. "It was almost unreal." "It happened so fast. I hope I won't wake up and someone tells me that it was a dream." Liverpool, who is also fighting for a European place along with Newcastle United, hosts Stoke City while Newcastle United faces the visiting Queens Park Rangers. Bottom of the table Blackburn looked to move up the table when they host Fulham at Ewood Park. In the only two other Premier League games this weekend, Everton hosts Aston Villa while Norwich City visit West Bromwich Albion.

McKay to fight for Rangers place

Midfielder Matt McKay has turned down a loan switch to Saudi side Al Ittihad, preferring to fight for his place at Rangers.

The 28-year-old Australia international midfielder joined the Scottish Premier League holders in August after captaining the Brisbane Roar to the A-League title in 2010/11. But he has made just three appearances for Rangers since signing, with his last coming on November 20 against St Johnstone. He has been an unused substitute on another five occasions but failed to make the bench for a Scottish Cup tie at Arbroath on Sunday. A chance for first-team football arose with Al Ittihad, with the Saudi giants keen to sign McKay on loan until the

end of the season with the option of buying him. But McKay is against a loan move, according to his agent John Viola. "Matt is not interested in going out on loan," Viola told The Daily Express in Scotland. "He wants to stay and fight for his place at Rangers. He hasn't had as many games as he would have liked but he is prepared to stay and fight to get into the team." "He believes he can make his mark and he also knows that if he can get into the Rangers team then it would strengthen his case when it comes to the Australian World Cup squad." McKay played and scored in a 4-1 friendly win for Rangers against Kilmarnock on Tuesday.

Dalglish scoffs at Carroll exit

Kenny Dalglish dismissed rumours linking Andy Carroll with Newcastle United following Liverpool's Carling Cup victory over Manchester City. Reports on Wednesday linked Carroll with a cut-price return to Tyneside 12 months after the striker's 35-million-pound transfer to Anfield.

But after seeing his team win 1-0 away to City in the first leg of their Carling Cup semi-final, Dalglish issued a firm denial when asked if he was worried about losing the centre-forward. "I'm worried about the people that invent them (the rumours)," Dalglish said. "It has absolutely no foundation whatsoever. I don't need to justify what's in the paper. That's your (journalists) job. I have not heard any Andy Carroll rumours."

Carroll was part of a side that won 1-0 at the Etihad Stadium thanks to a penalty from captain Steven Gerrard in the 13th minute of Wednesday's match. Dalglish hailed a "fantastic" Liverpool performance but warned his side will have to be at their best as the club goes in search of a first trophy since 2006. "We might have a slight advantage with the goal but there's no-one jumping through hoops at our place," he said.

"It's not finished unless they want to withdraw. I don't think they're going to do that. We have to stay professional." "It was two different performances in each half. The first half we were more threatening, but in the second half we battered down the hatches." "Not too many teams have come here and got no goals against them. It might not have been the prettiest of performances but we needed desire and ambition." "Once we were in front we were determined not to lose. It was a fantastic performance by the players against a good side." City manager Roberto Mancini backed his team to recover from their second defeat in succession, after they also lost 3-2 at home to Manchester United in the FA Cup on Sunday. "This moment is very difficult, but it is important that we stay very confident," he said. "This moment is not a good moment. We have to continue to work and continue to believe in ourselves." "We did well until three or four days ago, now we have lost two important games." "We can win away against Liverpool. It will be difficult, but we will try. It is only one goal."

FOOTBALL BIBLES

Copa del Rey wrap: Heart-break for Sevilla, Levante do it easy

A 2-1 win was not enough for Sevilla to progress from their Copa del Rey tie against Valencia, while Espanyol and Levante progressed.

Valencia came into the round-of-16 second leg with a 1-0 lead following their narrow victory at home on January 5, and Roberto Soldado's 66th minute goal at the Estadio Ramon Sanchez Pizjuan on Wednesday was enough to send them through 2-2 on aggregate.

Valencia progress to a quarter-final tie against Levante, who defeated Alcorcon 5-2 on aggregate after a 4-0 drubbing on Wednesday. Segunda Division team Alcorcon had inflicted a 2-1 defeat on Levante in the first leg of their tie earlier this month, but there was to be no repeat of that upset at Estadio Ciudad de Valencia.

Also on Wednesday, Espanyol defeated second-tier Cordoba 4-2 at home to progress 5-4 on aggregate.

La Liga club Espanyol were trailing 2-1 following the first leg away from home, but a first-half brace from Alvaro Vazquez and Didac's goal saw them transform the deficit to a 4-2 aggregate lead.

Coppa Italia wrap: Roma win sets up Juve showdown

Roma defeated Fiorentina 3-0 on Wednesday to book an enticing quarter-final tie with Juventus in the Coppa Italia.

Erik Lamela gave the hosts the lead eight minutes into the second half at the Stadio Olimpico, and the Argentine doubled his side's advantage on 66 minutes.

Fiorentina were unlucky to not take the lead when Cicinho made two great blocks to prevent first Riccardo Montolivo and then Stevan Jovetic during a goalmouth scramble.

The warning shots apparently served to rouse Roma, who responded through Lamela.

The attacking midfielder sent Francesco Totti through on goal, but the veteran was only capable of forcing a good save from Murara Neto.

A disappointing Federico Viviani was withdrawn at the interval, to be replaced by Simone Perrotta, and the substitution paid immediate dividends.

Totti tore into the box to reach Perrotta's knockdown, and although the Roma skipper was unable to get the ball under control, it broke to Lamela, who kept his cool to send a shot through Neto's legs.

After Fiorentina had several good chances, Roma duly killed off the game as another substitute, with Totti again providing the ball for Lamela to complete a simple finish.

It was largely carelessness from Fiorentina that resulted in a third goal.

A poor pass from Neto went straight to Borini, who ran into the box and promptly punished his opponent's sloppiness by netting a third.

With Fiorentina vanquished, Luis Enrique's men advance to face Serie A leaders Juventus in the quarter-finals.

Lazio star out for two months Lazio midfielder Lorik Cana will be sidelined for up to two months with a back injury.

A knock to the Albania captain compounded Lazio's 4-0 defeat to Siena at the weekend in Serie A, as the 28-year-old was replaced by Alvaro Gonzalez just after half-time.

Cana missed Tuesday's 3-2 Coppa Italia win over Hellas Verona, and will need to spend more than a month resting before starting training again with Edy Reja's men.

"Cana underwent tests that revealed a fracture of the apophysis transversae in his second and third lumbar vertebrae," a statement said.

"The player will have to rest for 40 days and the recovery time period is estimated at two months."

Cana's injury is made all the worse due to the fact that midfield duo Stefano Mauri and Christian Brocchi are also out injured. Lazio will look to get back to winning ways in Serie A on Sunday as they take on Atalanta at the Stadio Olimpico.

Milan wait on City's Tevez response

Serie A champions AC Milan are still waiting for a response from Manchester City over their latest offer for Argentine striker Carlos Tevez.

Milan have already agreed personal terms with Tevez and have made a loan bid to the English Premier League leaders, with an option to purchase the player at the end of the stint.

But Goal.com claim the Serie A giants have yet to hear back from City, and Milan will not plan their next move until they have received a response from City.

Milan face stiff competition in the race for Tevez's services from arch-rivals Inter Milan, who are known to have made a big-money bid for a permanent deal.

But Milan chief executive officer Galliani refuses to be panicked by his city rivals' offer. Galliani will wait on a reply from City first, before looking into the details of Inter's bid for Tevez. Only then will he table a new offer, if required.

Milan reportedly feel they hold an advantage over their city rivals because of their personal agreement with the 27-year-old Argentina international.

Balotelli: I'm lonely, but have adapted

Mario Balotelli believes he has adapted well to the English Premier League, but says he has 'no real friends' at Manchester City.

The former Inter Milan striker arrived at Eastlands in August 2010 and, after a difficult start to his career in England, he has begun to justify his reputation as one of the most exciting young attacking players in world football.

But Balotelli said while he is happy with his progress on the field, he has battled loneliness off it.

"I am 21 and already I have lived away from home for nearly two years," he told L'Uomo Vogue. "I have adapted quite well - in spite of the huge (cultural) differences."

"But I have no real friends here. If I had to move, right at this minute, I would choose Italy." Balotelli - scorer of nine goals in all competitions for City this campaign - said the intrusive and sensationalist nature of the British tabloid press had not helped him settle in Manchester.

"If I buy a Fiat Uno, I read that for a guy like me it would have been more suitable to buy a Ferrari," he said. "If I choose the Ferrari, they write that I should keep my feet on the ground and buy an Uno."

"If I laugh, I'm not serious enough; I don't laugh, I'm a sulk who doesn't enjoy doing the best job in the world."

Carling Cup: Manchester City 0 Liverpool 1

Liverpool will take a 1-0 advantage back to Anfield after defeating Manchester City in their Carling Cup semi-final on Wednesday.

A first-half penalty from Steven Gerrard was all that separated the sides at the Etihad Stadium after City defender Stefan Savic clumsily felled a charging Daniel Agger in the box.

The loss was City's second at home in four days following the defeat to local rivals Manchester City on Sunday, while the visitors found more cup success after their 5-1 win over Oldham last Friday.

City would have been confident heading into the match having defeated Liverpool 3-0 at the same ground just a week ago. Roberto Mancini's side had a different look for this match though, with Yaya and Kolo Toure away on African Cup of Nations duties with the Ivory Coast and Vincent Kompany suspended.

Liverpool pressed from the off and Carroll was handed a great chance to open the scoring after the striker was sent through on goal by Downing.

Carroll shrugged off a challenge from Savic, but could not beat the oncoming Joe Hart with a low right-foot shot.

City hard barely attacked in the Reds' third when Gerrard fired a stinging shot at Hart which dipped at the far corner, but the goalkeeper reacted quickly enough to palm the Liverpool skipper's effort out for a corner.

There was nothing Hart could do when Liverpool was awarded a penalty on 12 minutes, with Savic's high-footed challenge bringing down Agger as he burst into the box.

Gerrard stepped up to the spot-kick and slotted the ball home past Hart to put the Reds in the lead.

Hughes in for long haul at QPR

Hughes was appointed as the new boss at Loftus Road on Tuesday after the sacking of Neil Warnock two days earlier, as the QPR board became increasingly anxious about the side's lowly 17th position.

Following discussions with the club's hierarchy, the former Blackburn, Fulham and Manchester City boss revealed he was confident that the west London outfit's ambitions match his own.

"My last couple of positions haven't lasted as long as I wanted them to so now I want longevity," Hughes told reporters.

"I've just had my first day at the training ground - I'm certainly not thinking of leaving any time soon."

"The situation at the end of last season is one that has happened. I made the decision (to leave Fulham) that was the correct decision and I stand by that."

"This excited me. My thoughts now shouldn't be an issue to them."

"I'm looking forward and really happy with the decision I've made, very excited of what is ahead of us."

"I needed to get all the facts on the table and get an understanding of the story that QPR hope to have in the future."

"So it's important from my point of view that I understood that clearly, the fact that the club want to go places, build from the bottom up."

"They want to ensure they are a successful Premier League club for many, many years and that fitted very comfortably with where I see my career needs to go now."



Luca Cetta

Can Inter be considered a Scudetto challenger?

Inter started the new year as they finished 2011, whilst it was also a winning start for Milan, Juventus and Udinese. Furthermore, it took only one round of the new year for the first coaching casualty.

Before their home match against Parma, Inter had ended 2011 with six wins from seven matches. Facing criticism for allowing the players to remain on holiday over Christmas longer than most – until January 2nd – Inter looked fresh and continued their revival with a barnstorming victory.

In truth Parma did not offer much resistance, but a brace from Diego Milito, his first since round one, was indicative of the club's recent turnaround in fortunes. The match was as good as over by half-time with the Nerazzurri three goals to the good and there was much to like about Inter.

Coach Claudio Ranieri agreed, claiming after the 5-0 win, "I think this was the best Inter performance of my time here, as we were very concentrated and interpreted the game well."

For Parma the result signalled the end of Franco Colomba's reign. The Coach took over in April 2011 but six matches without a win cost him his job. Former Italy tactician Roberto Donadoni has been appointed.

Meanwhile, Milan continued their fine



Inter Milan's Giampaolo Pazzini (left) celebrates next to his team-mate Diego Milito after scoring against Parma during their Serie A match at San Siro stadium in Milan last Saturday.

form, overcoming a spirited Atalanta 2-0 in Bergamo. Zlatan Ibrahimovic was once again on hand to net a penalty and the Swede helped seal the result ten minutes from time, crossing for Kevin-Prince Boateng to score. The loss was Atalanta's first at home this season.

Juventus fans made their thoughts regarding new signing Marco Borriello known before the clash against Lecce, displaying a banner that read: 'Borriello: Mercenary without honour or dignity.' On the pitch their performance was poor against a winless-at-home Lecce. Fabio Quagliarella went off in the first half after fracturing his cheekbone, but substitute Alessandro Matri tapped in the only goal of the match shortly after.

There was contrasting fortunes for Udinese and Lazio. The Zebrette crushed ten-man Cesena 4-1; Antonio Di Natale scored a double, including a goal inside the first minute. The game broke open in the second half when Cesena custodian Francesco Antonioli allowed a Pablo Armero shot to squirm underneath his body. Following that and the red card to Maurizio Lauro, Udinese added a further two goals.

Lazio started the year on the end of a 0-4 hiding by Siena. The Robur went into the match winless since October plus goalless since mid-November and the fans protested against the club hierarchy before the match. However Lazio, the side with the best away record in the league, was blown away.

City rivals Roma defeated Chievo 2-0, both goals coming from Francesco Totti penalties. After scoring the first (his first of the season), Totti lifted his shirt to reveal one underneath which read 'sorry for the delay'; it begs the question of just how many matches did he wear the shirt previously...

Elsewhere, Palermo went down 1-3 to a rampant Napoli, a result which did not quite match Palermo President Maurizio Zamparini's 1-0 prediction. It was a poor showing from Bortolo Mutti's team, who continue to misfire. Fiorentina's away win at Novara was their first of the season, with Riccardo Montolivo and Stevan Jovetic netting fine strikes.

Cagliari sent Pasquale Marino back to the drawing board after the Genoa Coach experienced a first-up 3-0 loss and finally, Bologna's two second-half

strikes meant victory over Catania.

The Milan derby will dominate the headlines this week and it will be a true test of Inter's new-found strength. A win in the derby will have Inter just five points behind the Rossoneri. They have found the winning touch and a positive result here could be the spur required to challenge for the title. It won't be easy against Milan, who are unbeaten since October 2nd, a run that has included just two draws.

The lead-up to the derby has also been littered with transfer speculation. As Alexandre Pato's future at Milanello looks uncertain, the two clubs are battling for Carlos Tevez signature. The player and his agent have reached an agreement with Milan, but Inter has offered Manchester City more money.

Juventus will look to capitalise on any Milan slip-up when they host Cagliari. Quagliarella will miss up to two weeks due to the injury suffered against Lecce, while Giorgio Chiellini has reached the yellow card limit and is suspended. The visitors are hoping captain Daniele Conti returns in time for the trip to Turin.

Lazio will look to bounce back from their loss against Siena in a delicately poised clash against Atalanta at the Stadio Olimpico as Udinese are on the road to face Genoa. While their away form has been inconsistent, Udinese will look to take advantage of the turmoil surrounding the Grifoni.

Napoli is in pursuit of a Champions league position and host Bologna, while Roma travels to Sicily to face Catania without the injured Pablo Osvaldo. Fiorentina will look to keep their revival going at home to struggling Lecce.

A relegation dogfight will take place when Cesena hosts Novara, as Chievo is at home against Palermo. Finally, Donadoni starts off on the Parma bench with a home clash against Siena.

Balkan Wrap

Alex Milic

PAOK FINED

Serbia

Red Star has begun its winter training sessions and is joined by a new conditional coach in Radivoje Radakovic who replaces Srdjan Jorojevic. Robert Prosinecki has expressed his dissatisfaction of the teams fitness and condition levels and thus the change needed to be made.

Prosinecki is returning from a weeks visit to former club FC Barcelona where he learned some secrets of the trade at the European Champions, he is good friends with former team-mate and current Barca Manager Pep Guardiola. There was talk that Prosinecki was looking at brining a couple of Barcelona's B players to Red Star on a loan until the end of the season but a majority of the players had no attention on leaving the Spanish Segunda for the Serbian Super League.

Red Star will head off to Montenegro for the first part of their winter training and will play warm-up matches with Buducnost, Zeta, Grbalj and against Bosnian



Greece's PAOK of Salonika have been fined and excluded from European competition for a period of three years.

side Leotar before leaving for Turkey at the start of February where they will take on Zilina, Cluj, Litex, Yangzua and Dinamo Bucharest.

Legendary Italian Manager Marcelo Lippi discussed with Serbian Sports Site Sportal.rs the problems in Serbian football.

"I know that Serbia has good clubs with the likes of Partizan, Red Star and Vojvodina but your managers find it tough to make it big in Europe these days. Once upon a time there was Miljan Miljanic later on Vujadin Boskov and Radomir Antic who were very successful managers in Europe and in recent years apart from Ivan Jovanovic and Sinisa Mihajlovic I cant remember a manager from Serbia coaching in Europe's top

leagues.

Vojvodina captain Slobodan Medojevic has signed for Bundesliga side Wolfsburg. The Serbia U/21 midfielder has been a vital part of the 'Red and Whites' from Novi Sad and this will be a big blow for the clubs ambitions in the second half of the season.

Croatia

The European Futsal Championships will be held in Croatia from January 31st to February 11. This is the first major football tournament held in Croatia since the European Championships in 1976 when Zagreb hosted a couple of matches when Yugoslavia hosted the finals. Croatia is in Group A and will take on Romania and Czech Republic and have a great chance to reach the

knockout stages. In Group tournament favorite Spain will take on Ukraine and Slovenia, Group C sees Italy battle it out with Russia and Turkey while Group D features Portugal, Serbia and Azerbaijan. This is the eighth European Futsal Championships with Spain being the most successful team winning the tournament five times and the last three installments, the other two teams that have lifted the trophy are Italy and Russia.

Croatia Coach Mato Stankovic is optimistic about his sides chances in the finals and hopes for a happy homecoming.

"We know a lot. We have met the Czech national team many times in qualifiers before I came. Our results weren't very good, but all the matches were played in a short period of time, and only small details decided the winner. I even think the Czechs were very lucky in those matches, and I hope that it's time for that luck to turn. As for Romania, we played two friendly matches against them in Croatia last year. We won one match and lost the other. They are an interesting team, with a Spanish coach, but they are not unbeatable." Stankovic told UEFA.com

"Our primary goal is to get to the second round. For us, for the competition, for futsal in Croatia, I think that would be good. We'll stick to that primary aim, we'll do everything to get to the second round, and then we'll see what happens later." Stankovic added.

Viva Espana



Pepe Lopez

Barca take awards, Real surge 5 points clear

Barcelona's star player Leo Messi and coach Pep Guardiola took out FIFA's top honours; World Player and World Coach of the year, as the Real Madrid's star player Ronaldo and coach Jose Mourinho chose to snub the gala FIFA football event.

Instead the pair from Madrid enjoyed a weekend of football where they managed to open up a 5-point gap at the top of the Spanish La Liga over Barcelona FC. Leo Messi won his third FIFA World Player of the Year award and was quoted on the www.fifa.com web-site;

"I'm very proud to have won it three times, especially one after the other. It's hard to win one, let alone three. I'm very happy and this award gives me as much pleasure as the first. I hope I can keep on performing like this and win more team titles, which is what you need to make it to wonderful occasions like this. I want to achieve things with my national team and keep playing the way I am. The same as the start of every year: to try and do it all over again. We know it's getting more and more difficult though."



Barcelona's Argentinian forward Lionel Messi (C) receives the FIFA Ballon d'Or award from UEFA president Michel Platini (R) at the Kongresshaus during the FIFA Ballon d'Or ceremony in Zurich. Platini heralded Messi as "a killer" on Monday after the Barcelona star matched the Frenchman's record of having won three consecutive Ballon d'Or awards.

Greece

Panathiniakos has been knockout out of the Greek Cup following a penalty shoot-out loss to Panionios. Olympiakos is through to the next round following a convincing 3:0 win over Thrasylvoulos with Serbian veteran Marko Pantelic netting a double.

Pas Giannina were humbled at home against Asteras Tripolis 4:1. Kerkyra knockout out Doxa 2:0. League action resumes over the weekend with AEK taking on Xanti, Olympiakos welcomes Levadiakos. Atromitos takes on Aris and Panathiniakos is on the road to Pas Giannina.

News from UEFA regarding PAOK: The UEFA Control and Disciplinary Body has handed down penalties to Greek club

Barca coach Pep Guardiola dedicated his award to many others who have helped him achieve his success; "I would like to dedicate this award to the thousands of people who have worked at Barca in the last 100 years and have helped build one of the best teams in the world. It is an honor for me to be part of the group which has built this incredible team. From the bottom of my heart I would like to dedicate this title to Tito Vilanova, my friend, companion, assistant, who is always there, even though he has not been with us that much lately. Tito, this one is for you."

Mourinho, who chose against attending the awards ceremony made the following comments in regards to the FIFA event;

"(Guardiola) deserves it. I just hope they don't take too long to get it to Pep because I won it and I'm still waiting to receive it (the trophy). To be among the three finalists is an honour and I would have liked to be with the other two finalists and to congratulate this year's winner, who I think will be Guardiola." On the player of the year award, Mourinho stated; "Neither Messi nor Cristiano Ronaldo will stay with the number of Ballons d'Or they already have. Both play in great teams, they are a long way from 30 and they are going to win more trophies."

Whilst Real Madrid won convincingly 5-1 at home in front 72,000 fans in Madrid against Granada, Barcelona coughed up a late equaliser against home town rivals Espanyol. Cesc Fábregas had put Barcelona ahead after just 16 minutes but in a frantic finish to the match, Espanyol's Alvaro Vazquez equalised with just 4 minutes remaining on the clock.



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ENGLAND EPL



	Last5games							
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Manchester City	20	15	3	2	56	16	+40	48
2 Manchester United	20	14	3	3	49	20	+29	45
3 Tottenham Hotspur	20	14	3	3	38	20	+18	45
4 Chelsea	20	11	4	5	39	25	+14	37
5 Arsenal	20	11	3	6	36	28	+8	36
6 Liverpool	20	9	7	4	24	18	+6	34
7 Newcastle United	20	9	6	5	29	25	+4	33
8 Stoke City	20	8	5	7	22	31	-9	29
9 Norwich City	20	6	7	7	30	35	-5	25
10 Sunderland	20	6	6	8	27	23	+4	24
11 Everton	20	7	3	10	20	24	-4	24
12 Swansea City	20	5	8	7	20	23	-3	23
13 Aston Villa	20	5	8	7	22	26	-4	23
14 Fulham	20	5	8	7	22	26	-4	23
15 West Bromwich ...	20	6	4	10	19	28	-9	22
16 Wolverhampton ...	20	4	5	11	22	36	-14	17
17 Queens Park Ra...	20	4	5	11	19	35	-16	17
18 Bolton Wanderers	20	5	1	14	25	43	-18	16
19 Wigan Athletic	20	3	6	11	18	41	-23	15
20 Blackburn Rovers	20	3	5	12	29	43	-14	14

GERMANY Bundesliga



	Last5games							
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Bayern München	17	12	1	4	43	10	+33	37
2 Borussia Dortmund	17	10	4	3	35	12	+23	34
3 Schalke 04	17	11	1	5	38	22	+16	34
4 Borussia M'gla...	17	10	3	4	25	11	+14	33
5 Werder Bremen	17	9	2	6	30	31	-1	29
6 Bayer Leverkusen	17	7	5	5	22	22	+0	26
7 Hannover 96	17	5	8	4	20	24	-4	23
8 Stuttgart	17	6	4	7	23	20	+3	22
9 Hoffenheim	17	6	4	7	19	19	+0	22
10 Köln	17	6	3	8	27	35	-8	21
11 Hertha BSC	17	4	8	5	24	26	-2	20
12 Wolfsburg	17	6	2	9	23	34	-11	20
13 Hamburger SV	17	4	7	6	21	27	-6	19
14 Mainz 05	17	4	6	7	22	29	-7	18
15 Nürnberg	17	5	3	9	17	28	-11	18
16 Kaiserslautern	17	3	7	7	13	21	-8	16
17 Augsburg	17	3	6	8	15	28	-13	15
18 Freiburg	17	3	4	10	21	39	-18	13

THE CHAMPIONSHIP



	Last5games							
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Southampton	25	14	5	6	47	28	+19	47
2 West Ham United	25	14	5	6	40	23	+17	47
3 Cardiff City	25	12	9	4	41	27	+14	45
4 Middlesbrough	25	12	9	4	30	23	+7	45
5 Reading	25	11	6	8	32	25	+7	39
6 Hull City	25	12	3	10	26	25	+1	39
7 Blackpool	25	10	8	7	39	31	+8	38
8 Leeds United	25	11	5	9	39	36	+3	38
9 Birmingham City	24	10	7	7	33	26	+7	37
10 Derby County	25	11	4	10	30	33	-3	37
11 Burnley	25	11	3	11	37	33	+4	36
12 Crystal Palace	25	10	6	9	24	20	+0	36
13 Leicester City	25	9	8	8	33	28	+5	35
14 Brighton & Hov...	25	10	5	10	26	28	-2	35
15 Peterborough U...	25	9	6	10	44	41	+3	33
16 Barnsley	25	9	6	10	35	38	-3	33
17 Portsmouth	24	8	7	9	27	25	+2	31
18 Watford	25	7	9	9	27	34	-7	30
19 Bristol City	25	7	6	12	23	34	-11	27
20 Ipswich Town	25	8	3	14	35	49	-14	27
21 Millwall	25	6	8	11	24	28	-4	26
22 Nottingham Forest	25	7	3	15	21	39	-18	24
23 Doncaster Rovers	25	6	4	15	22	43	-21	22
24 Coventry City	25	4	7	14	20	34	-14	19

Greece Super League



	Last5games							
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Olympiakos Piraeus	16	11	4	1	36	12	+24	37
2 Panathinaikos	14	10	3	1	31	15	+16	33
3 AEK Athens	16	10	2	4	24	16	+8	32
4 PAOK	16	7	5	4	23	14	+9	26
5 Atromitos	15	7	5	3	16	14	+2	26
6 Xanthi	16	7	4	5	22	16	+6	25
7 Ergotelis	16	6	3	7	17	20	-3	21
8 OFI	16	5	5	6	16	16	+0	20
9 Aris	15	4	5	6	12	14	-2	17
10 Panionios	16	4	4	8	14	18	-4	16
11 Panaitolikos	14	4	4	6	11	16	-5	16
12 Asteras Tripolis	14	4	3	7	8	17	-9	15
13 PAS Giannina	14	2	5	7	12	19	-7	11
14 Kerkyra	14	2	4	8	8	20	-12	10
15 Levadiakos	10	2	3	5	6	14	-8	9
16 Doxa Dramas	10	0	3	7	1	16	-15	3

SPAIN La Liga



	Last5games							
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Real Madrid	17	14	1	2	61	16	+45	43
2 Barcelona	17	11	5	1	51	9	+42	38
3 Valencia	17	10	4	3	28	18	+10	34
4 Levante	17	9	3	5	25	19	+6	30
5 Osasuna	17	6	8	3	21	28	-7	26
6 Málaga	17	7	4	6	20	22	-2	25
7 Sevilla	17	6	6	5	19	19	+0	24
8 Espanyol	17	7	3	7	18	21	-3	24
9 Athletic Club	17	5	8	4	23	19	+4	23
10 Real Betis	17	7	1	9	19	22	-3	22
11 Atlético Madrid	17	5	5	7	23	27	-4	20
12 Getafe	17	5	5	7	17	23	-6	20
13 Rayo Vallecano	17	5	4	8	19	26	-7	19
14 Mallorca	17	4	7	6	15	22	-7	19
15 Granada	17	5	4	8	11	21	-10	19
16 Real Sociedad	17	4	6	7	16	23	-7	18
17 Racing Santander	17	3	8	6	12	21	-9	17
18 Villarreal	17	3	7	7	15	25	-10	16
19 Sporting Gijón	17	4	3	10	16	29	-13	15
20 Real Zaragoza	17	2	4	11	13	32	-19	10

HOLLAND Eredivisie



	Last5games							
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 AZ	17	12	2	3	36	15	+21	38
2 PSV	17	11	4	2	48	19	+29	37
3 Twente	17	9	6	2	43	18	+25	33
4 Ajax	17	9	6	2	46	23	+23	33
5 Feyenoord	17	9	4	4	34	22	+12	31
6 Vitesse	17	8	5	4	23	16	+7	29
7 Heerenveen	17	7	7	3	39	28	+11	28
8 Groningen	17	7	5	5	29	28	+1	26
9 Roda JC	17	8	0	9	29	38	-9	24
10 NAC Breda	17	6	3	8	24	28	-4	21
11 ADO Den Haag	17	6	3	8	22	31	-9	21
12 Heracles	17	5	5	7	27	25	+2	20
13 RKC Waalwijk	17	5	3	9	17	28	-11	18
14 Utrecht	17	4	5	8	28	35	-7	17
15 NEC	17	5	2	10	17	27	-10	17
16 De Graafschap	17	3	3	11	16	39	-23	12
17 VVV	17	2	4	11	16	42	-26	10
18 Excelsior	17	1	5	11	9	41	-32	8

LEAGUE ONE



	Last5games							
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Charlton Athletic	24	16	6	2	49	19	+30	54
2 Sheffield United	25	15	5	5	49	27	+22	50
3 Sheffield Wedn...	24	15	4	5	45	31	+14	49
4 Huddersfield Town	25	12	11	2	51	25	+26	47
5 Milton Keynes Dons	24	13	7	4	48	25	+23	46
6 Carlisle United	25	11	8	6	40	38	+2	41
7 Stevenage	24	10	8	6	33	21	+12	38
8 Brentford	25	9	9	7	31	30	+1	36
9 AFC Bournemouth	25	9	7	9	31	32	-1	34
10 Bury	24	10	4	10	32	36	-4	34
11 Notts County	24	9	5	10	40	37	+3	32
12 Colchester United	24	8	8	8	34	38	-4	32
13 Hartlepool United	25	9	5	11	30	34	-4	32
14 Preston North End	24	9	5	10	37	42	-5	32
15 Oldham Athletic	24	8	7	9	32	36	-4	31
16 Leyton Orient	25	8	7	10	27	37	-10	31
17 Tranmere Rovers	24	8	6	10	26	29	-3	30
18 Exeter City	25	6	7	12	24	39	-15	25
19 Scunthorpe United	24	4	11	9	31	38	-7	23
20 Walsall	25	4	11	10	25	32	-7	23
21 Yeovil Town	25	4	9	12	26	41	-15	21
22 Wycombe Wanderers	25	5	5	15	28	46	-18	20
23 Rochdale	24	4	8	12	23	41	-18	20
24 Chesterfield	25	3	7	15	29	47	-18	16

France Ligue 1



	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 PSG	19	12	4	3	31	17	+14	40	WDWWL
2 Montpellier	19	11	4	4	39	23	+16	37	LDLWW
3 Lille	19	9	9	1	33	19	+14	36	DDWWW
4 Olympique Lyon	19	11	2	6	31	21	+10	35	LWWWWW
5 Stade Rennes	19	9	5	5	29	23	+6	32	WDLWL
6 Olympique Mars...	19	8	7	4	27	18	+9	31	WWDWW
7 Toulouse	19	8	7	4	20	17	+3	31	DDWLW
8 Saint-Étienne	19	8	6	5	23	21	+2	30	LWWDW
9 Lorient	19	6	6	7	18	21	-3	24	DLLLL
10 Bordeaux	19	5	8	6	20	22	-2	23	WDWWW
11 Evian TG	19	5	7	7	27	29	-2	22	WLWLL
12 Brest	19	3	12	4	19	19	+0	21	DWDDL
13 Valenciennes	19	5	5	9	18	21	-3	20	WLWLL
14 Caen	19	5	5	9	24	29	-5	20	DLLLL
15 Auxerre	19	4	7	8	26	30	-4	19	DLWLL
16 Dijon	19	5	4	10	20	35	-15	19	DLDDW
17 Nice	19	4	6	9	21	23	-2	18	DWLWL
18 Nancy	19	4	6	9	17	26	-9	18	LWDLL
19 Sochaux	19	4	6	9	21	34	-13	18	LLDLL
20 Ajaccio	19	3	6	10	20	36	-16	15	WDDLL

WELLINGTON PHOENIX



Back row: Daniel Sanchez, Leo Bertos, Chris Greenacre, Tony Warner, Ben Sigmund, Tony Lochhead.
Front row: Daniel Cortes, Manny Muscat, Andrew Durante, Tim Brown, Vince Lia

PHOTO: DANIEL PANTER

Friday 13th January 2012